Biographical Conversations,

ON THE MOST

EMINENT AND INSTRUCTIVE

BRITISH CHARACTERS;

INTERSPERSED WITH

NUMEROUS ANECDOTES,

ILLUSTRATIVE OF

THEIR LIVES AND ACTIONS,

AND OF THE

TIMES IN WHICH THEY LIVED.

BY THE

REV. WILLIAM BINGLEY, M. A. F. L. S.

Late of Peter-house, Cambridge, and Author of Animal Biography, &c.

Designed for the Use of Young Persons.

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NJORE MAHARAJA SERFOGI'S

PREFACE.

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THE delight that is experienced, and the information that is often elicited in domestic circles, by the familiar discussion of literary and scientific subjects, suggested the plan of the present work. It occurred to the author, that, if such discussions were capable of yielding important instruction, conversations on the human character, illustrative of the developement, the progress, and attainments of the human mind, must be capable of yielding instruction of still greater importance: if, as Pope says,

"The proper study of mankind be man,"

there can, indeed, be no species of improvement more apposite to this peculiar description of writing than Biography.

It is true that numerous objections have been made to what are called books in dialogue; but these objections are chiefly applicable to such as are in *question and answer*. The questions are said to interrupt the current of the narration, to occupy a space which might be filled with more important

matter; and to give to the works in which they are found, the character of a disagreeable and monotonous uniformity. All these objections, however, may, without difficulty, be avoided, by introducing numerous characters, and adopting a dramatic form.

Experience has shown that such form is peculiarly attractive to young persons. Their own ideas become, as it were, embodied *with what* they read; and they fancy themselves taking part in the discussion with those *of whom* they read. This mode of instruction has other advantages. It admits of scope for numerous incidental reflections and observations of which no other form is so capable; and, from an attentive perusal of judicious discussions of this nature, the young may also be taught to discuss similar subjects by themselves. The present volume has been drawn up with a still further view. Each of the lives may be turned into an exercise in English composition, if, for this purpose, it be attentively read, and if, from recollection, its principal contents be written down, in the form of a narrative.

With respect to the peculiar plan that has been adopted, of arrangement under distinct heads, of Statesmen, Philosophers, Divines, &c.; this, it was

considered, would be useful in giving a greater latitude to particular subjects; and, at the same time, in affording, to the juvenile reader, an immediate view of some of those persons who have been most eminent in each of the classes. But, under such arrangement, it will be evident that an unavoidable difficulty must sometimes occur, arising from many individuals having been celebrated for various acquirements. Some, for instance, who have been arranged under the head of divines, might, with equal propriety, have been placed among the philosophers; and some among general writers, who are also celebrated as poets.

Another particular must be noticed. It is known, to all readers of biography, that the most important information is not, in every case, to be looked for in the lives of those persons who have attained the greatest celebrity. In the present work the author has endeavoured to select such lives only as were capable of affording instruction, and of making the strongest and most permanent impression on the minds of those readers, to whose use they are here alone appropriated.

Another part of his design has been to insert, in every life, as many anecdotes as possible; well knowing that the attention of young persons is,

in general, much more easily fixed by example than by precept; by incident than by observation. With a view to the formation of the youthful mind, he has inserted as many important particulars as possible, relative to the education, and progress in knowledge, of the individuals whose lives he has made the subject of discussion; and by the anecdotes he has been able to collect, he has endeavoured to illustrate the advantages that result to young persons, from submission to authority and restraint, from application to study, from industry, integrity, and obedience; and the unhappiness that is the invariable consequence of disobedience, indolence, imprudence, bad company, and dissipation. But, as infinitely the most important of all, he has invariably endeavoured to show the necessity of early religious instruction and habits.

Charlotte Street, Bloomsbury,
London, Dec. 15, 1817.

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Biographical Conversations.

INTRODUCTION.

It was a little before Christmas that Frederic Montagu, accompanied by his tutor the Rev. Mr. Allen, had arrived at Seaford Castle, in Devonshire, the seat of his uncle Sir Charles Irwin. They had been invited to pass there a few months previously to Frederic making his final preparations for college. Sir Charles's family at this time consisted of himself, Lady Irwin, his son Edmund, a youth about seventeen years of age, and two daughters, of whom Louisa was the elder, but both of them younger than their brother.

The education of Edmund had been wholly conducted by Sir Charles, who, as far as it was possible, had sought to let recreation and instruction go hand in hand, and to communicate knowledge through the medium of amusement.

Frederic had not been long at Seaford before Sir Charles, in conjunction with Mr. Allen, had concerted several plans for the useful occupation of their time. One of these was that, in the evenings, when they were otherwise disengaged, they should discuss the lives and characters of different persons, eminent for their talents, their learning, and their virtues. It was proposed that Edmund and Frederic should prepare themselves, on the respective subjects, from books in Sir Charles's library; and it was considered that the discussion would not only afford Sir Charles and Mr. Allen a means of examining them as to the information they should thus obtain, but also of communicating to them any important facts or observations that might escape their researches.

The scheme was no sooner suggested than the young gentlemen were eager to put it into execution. They were requested to select the lives of such persons as they considered most interesting. The choice was left wholly to themselves. All the direction they received was, that these were to be discussed in classes, and, as far as convenient, according to the order of time in which they had flourished.

EMINENT STATESMEN.

FIRST EVENING.

The family party had assembled in Sir Charles Irwin's library, and after the servants had brought in the tea, Sir Charles, playfully quoting Cowper, exclaimed,

> Now stir the fire, now close the shutters fast,
> Let fall the curtains, wheel the sofa round;
> And, while the bubbling, and loud hissing urn
> Throws up a steamy column—let our strife
> Commence.

Frederic and *Edmund*. We are quite prepared, sir.

Lady Irwin. I shall have great pleasure in being permitted occasionally to join in your conversation. The plan that Sir Charles has mentioned, appears to me a very useful one; and I am confident you will each derive much information from it.

Sir Charles. With the least attention on their part it cannot be otherwise; for of all the kinds of narrative with which I am acquainted, I know none that is capable of yielding more important instruction, that is more eagerly read, or can be more easily applied to the purposes of life, than biography. But let me not be misunderstood. By biography I do not mean a mere chronological detail of actions, or of the dates of events that have occurred. Little indeed that the memory is able to retain can be derived from such. It is the office of biography, as Dr. Johnson has justly observed, to find out the paths which lead to our finest sensibilities; and, by acquainting us with domestic transactions, introducing us to private hours, and dis-

closing to us the secret propensities, enjoyments, and weaknesses of mankind, to increase our sympathy, heighten our curiosity, teach us to feel for the situation of others, and, by the effect of their examples, how to correct and conduct our own lives.

Lady Irwin. It has often occurred to me that anecdotes of private and domestic life must have a peculiar tendency to excite interest, as the happiness or misery which is detailed in such anecdotes, it is at least within the bounds of possibility, we may ourselves experience.

Sir Charles. We will now, if you please, proceed to business. Who, Frederic, is to be the subject of this evening's conversation?

Frederic. Edmund and I have looked over the History of England, as far as it relates to the reigns of Henry the Second and Henry the Eighth; and the different lives with which your library has furnished us of Archbishop Becket, and Cardinal Wolsey. We have selected these first, from their having been eminent statesmen of early times, and having had considerable alliance, in character and fortune, to each other.

Sir Charles. Of these, THOMAS A BECKET, as he is usually called, was by far the most ancient. You shall therefore commence with him; and, in the first place, let me ask you who he was?

Edmund. He was Archbishop of Canterbury, and High Chancellor of England during part of the reign of Henry the Second. Wolsey was chancellor in the reign of Henry the Eighth.

Mr. Allen. Which of you can inform me in what the duties of chancellor consist?

Frederic. I can. He is the chief magistrate in the judicial establishment of this country, and sits as judge in a court called the Court of Chancery. The office of chancellor used formerly to be conferred on some dignified clergyman, who was remarkable for his abilities, and for his knowledge of the law. Such were

both Becket and Wolsey. The Lord Chancellor has also the custody of the Great Seal, and is President or Speaker of the House of Lords.

Sir Charles. Right:—but it must be observed that this office is now, in many particulars, different from what it was formerly; and is by no means so extensive either in its powers or its privileges.

In what station of life were the parents of Becket?

Edmund. His father was a London merchant who had been taken prisoner at Jerusalem during the crusades, and was assisted in his escape by a Saracen lady, daughter of the person in whose custody he was detained. She fell in love with him, and was afterwards married to him; and their son was Thomas à Becket.

Frederic. When of sufficient age this boy was sent to Merton Abbey, in Surry, for his education. He afterwards pursued his studies in the University of Oxford, and subsequently in Paris. His advancement in life was extremely rapid.

Mr. Allen. And to what was this chiefly owing?

Frederic. To his very extraordinary talents; but I do not recollect by what means he obtained his first elevation.

Edmund. I am surprised at that, Frederic. I will tell you. Theobald, Archbishop of Canterbury, informed of his rapid progress in learning, was induced to take him under his protection, and send him into Italy to study the canon and civil law. At his return he gave him considerable preferment in the church; and so strongly recommended him to the notice of Henry the Second, that he was appointed tutor to the prince, the son of that king; and, before he was forty years of age, was elevated to the rank of chancellor.

Frederic. Now I recollect; and I recollect also the manner in which he is said to have conducted himself in his new office. He wholly laid aside his former character of a clergyman, and assumed that of a

courtier. He now conformed, in every particular, to the king's humour; partook of all his diversions, affected to observe the same hours of eating and going to bed, and to follow, in almost every other particular, the conduct of the king.

Sir Charles. William Fitz-Stephen, a monk of Canterbury, who had been his private secretary, informs us that nothing could exceed at this time the splendour of Becket's household. He lived in the utmost magnificence, and entertained such numerous guests at his banquets, that he was obliged to have his rooms every day covered with clean hay or straw in winter, and with green boughs or rushes in summer, lest his guests, not finding seats at his table, should soil their clothes by sitting on the floor.

Mr. Allen. And it is related that he has been known to spend as much as five pounds on a single dish of eels.

Edmund. That was very extravagant, particularly as I know that five pounds were then equal in value to a larger sum than at present.

Mr. Allen. Indeed they were, an infinitely larger sum than you have any notion of. Five pounds, at that time, were five pounds weight of silver; and these would purchase articles of the value of more than a hundred and fifty pounds of present money.

Edmund. You astonish me!

Mr. Allen. But this was not all. When he travelled in state he is said to have been attended by more than two hundred knights, and by numerous other gay domestics. In his suite he had eight waggons. Two of these carried his ale; three the furniture of his chapel, of his bed-chamber, and his kitchen; and in the remaining three were conveyed his provisions, and other things requisite to the support of his establishment. Twelve pack-horses bore his money, plate, and utensils. To each waggon was chained a fierce mastiff, and on each pack-horse sat a baboon.

Frederic. How absurd a cavalcade! The baboons must have made a very ridiculous appearance!

Mr. Allen. In an age of ignorance all this mummery may have excited astonishment; but at present such conduct could only rouse our contempt.

Edmund. Frederic has observed, that when Becket became chancellor he wholly laid aside his character of a clergyman. What you have mentioned sufficiently proves this; but it is completely shown by his conduct whilst with Henry the Second in France. He there personally engaged in several military exploits, and even fought in single combat with a French knight, famous for his valour, whom he dismounted with his lance, and whose horse he gained and led off in triumph. This was surely very improper in a man who had ever entertained any due respect for his sacred profession.

Frederic. He was now in such favour with the king, that all the most important business of the state was committed to his management. Henry honoured him with his friendship and intimacy; and when he was disposed to amuse himself in sports of any description, Becket was always admitted of the party.

Edmund. A very extraordinary instance of the familiarity that existed betwixt the king and the chancellor has been recorded. They were one day riding together in the streets of London, when they observed a beggar shivering with cold. "It would be a good deed," said the king, "to give that shivering wretch a coat." "True," replied Becket, "and you, sir, may give him yours." "No, he shall have thine," retorted Henry; and seizing the skirt of the chancellor's vest, after a violent struggle, in which they had nearly dismounted each other, he succeeded in pulling it off. This done, he bestowed it on the astonished mendicant.

Sir Charles. This anecdote is not only in itself extraordinary, but is of considerable importance, as exhibiting a trait of the manners of the age to which it relates.

Edmund. We should not be a little surprised at present, were we to hear of such conduct of the king

and lord chancellor any where, but more particularly in the public streets of London.

Frederic. Becket, by his general complaisance and good humour, had rendered himself so agreeable, and by his industry and abilities was become so useful to his master, that, on the death of the Archbishop of Canterbury, he was selected as the fittest person to fill the vacancy in that see.

Mr. Allen. We might now, with reason, consider him at the summit of his ambition. He possessed the chancellorship, was Archbishop of Canterbury, and had been appointed legate or ambassador for the court of Rome. With consummate hypocrisy, however, he considered it requisite to change his character. He now affected to act the part of a saint, and sought to acquire a peculiar reputation for sanctity. Omitting even to consult the king on the subject, he gave up his commission of chancellor, pretending that he must thenceforward detach himself from worldly concerns, and employ himself wholly in the exercise of his spiritual functions.

Frederic. And he carried this project into effect in a very singular manner. In his retinue and attendants he retained all his former pomp and grandeur—

Mr. Allen. Which he still considered useful, to astonish and overawe the vulgar.

Frederic. And he assumed, in his own person, the greatest austerity, and the most rigid mortification. Such conduct he no doubt imagined would have an equal, or perhaps a greater tendency to the same end. He wore sackcloth next his skin.

Mr. Allen. Yes! and by his affected care to conceal it, contrived that it should be more particularly noticed by the world.

Frederic. But what is most remarkable, it was so filthy, and he changed it so seldom, that this sackcloth was filled with vermin. His usual diet was bread; and his drink water, which he even rendered further unpalatable by mixing it with unsavoury herbs. He

daily, on his knees, in imitation of Christ, washed the feet of thirteen beggars, whom he afterwards dismissed with presents; and he seemed to be perpetually employed in reciting prayers, in pious lectures, or in perusing religious writings.

Edmund. Surely he must have been sincere or he would not have endured such painful and mortifying deprivations as these.

Sir Charles. All men of penetration were able to discover that under this disguise he was meditating some great design; and that his ambition and ostentation had only been turned towards some new and more dangerous object.

Frederic. His violent and overbearing conduct was almost immediately afterwards the cause of a rupture betwixt himself and the king; and Henry, enraged at his ingratitude, overstepped the bounds both of moderation and prudence, in his determination if possible to punish him. After a long and bitter contest, on different subjects relative to the then unbounded privileges of the clergy, he caused Becket to be prosecuted on a charge of having, while chancellor, applied to his own use the public money.

Edmund. And, during the trial, we are told that Becket insolently entered the council room, with his crosier in his hand, to intimidate the judges; but, notwithstanding his boldness, he was condemned.

Frederic. He was so; but he found means to avoid punishment by escaping into Flanders, where he resided for some years in one of the convents.

Sir Charles. What were the consequences of this quarrel and proceedure?

Edmund. The pope espoused Becket's cause, and so great was his power over the church at this period, that Henry was at length obliged to consent that a conference should be held for amicably adjusting the differences which had occurred. For this purpose he went into France; and, to show his willingness towards a reconciliation, declared publicly, in the presence of

the French king, "If Becket will only pay to me the same submission which the greatest of his predecessors have paid to the least of mine, I shall be well satisfied."

Sir Charles. This appears to have been sufficiently candid on the part of the king; and it might be presumed, that Becket would, without hesitation, have assented to so reasonable a proposition.

Edmund. No; the haughty prelate had hopes, through the influence of the pope, of still further humbling his master, and at length by that means of rendering his own power over the English clergy beyond control; and on a trivial allegation he contrived that the conference should terminate without effect.

Frederic. But Becket and the king were at length reconciled.

Edmund. They were, but not until the king had been compelled to receive him again into his dominions on the most humiliating terms. It was agreed that all the subjects in dispute should continue in the same state as before the commencement of the controversy; and, that Becket should in no respect be required to surrender what were termed the rights of the church.

Mr. Allen. You have omitted to state, that Henry was so anxious to reconcile himself fully with Becket, that he took the most extraordinary steps to flatter his vanity; and that on one occasion he even degraded himself so far as to hold the stirrup whilst the haughty churchman mounted and dismounted his horse.

How did Becket conduct himself on his return to England?

Edmund. He made a public entry into London, amidst the acclamations of the populace; and his pride having been increased by his success, he proceeded from town to town in a sort of triumphal cavalcade. Scarcely was his power restored than he began to exert it to the utmost extent, and to conduct himself towards all the adherents of the king in the most tyrannical and arbitrary manner.

Sir Charles. And this procedure proved fatal to him.

Edmund. It did; for the king, who was then in Normandy, exasperated to an excess by the innumerable complaints that were made to him, at length exclaimed, in fury, "Is there no one who will avenge their monarch's cause upon this audacious priest?" His attendants were roused almost to madness; and four knights hastened to Canterbury, entered the cathedral where Becket was officiating with a few of his attendants, and slew him with their battle-axes at the foot of the altar.

Sir Charles. I will request of Frederic to inform us, what he has been able to collect respecting the character of Thomas à Becket.

Frederic. Most willingly, sir. He was a man of extraordinary talents, elevated mind, and invincible courage; but of an overbearing and turbulent spirit; passionate, haughty, and vain-glorious; in his resolutions inflexible, and in his resentments implacable. Lord Lyttleton, in his history of Henry the Second, has indeed delineated his character in such strong and various lights, that he has left us at a loss to determine, whether we can more admire the polished courtier and able statesman, or detest the haughty prelate and the bigotted and outrageous incendiary.

Mr. Allen. But how was the character of Becket esteemed by the people after his death?

Frederic. Oh! the clergy, whose power at this unenlighted period was unbounded, contrived to influence the minds of the populace in such a manner, that they considered him a martyr to the cause of religion. His resolution during life, and the heroism with which he is said to have died, confirmed their former notions of his sanctity. Every advantage was taken of this; and shortly afterwards it was declared, that miracles had been wrought at his tomb. These at length were believed to have been so numerous, that one of the monkish writers informs us, there were two large volumes of them recorded and kept in the church of Canterbury.

Lady Irwin. What were the kind of miracles chiefly believed to have been wrought there?

Mr. Allen. They were of almost every description. The contrivances of the monks were such, that they imposed on the people a belief not only that men, but that cows, dogs, and horses had been restored to life on his tomb. They even reported, that he rose from his coffin before he was buried, to light the tapers designed for his own funeral; and, that when that ceremony was ended, he stretched forth his hand to bless the people. It seems scarcely possible to conceive the credulity which existed respecting St. Thomas of Canterbury, as he was subsequently denominated. Pilgrimages from almost all parts of Europe were made to his tomb. A hundred thousand pilgrims to Canterbury have been registered at one time; and the devotion paid to him was infinitely greater than that paid to deity himself.

Lady Irwin. I suppose this mockery of religion must have terminated at the reformation of the church, in the reign of Henry the Eighth.

Mr. Allen. It did; and in a manner not a little absurd. By an extraordinary legal process Thomas à Becket, more than three hundred and fifty years after he had been dead, was cited to appear in court, and was then tried and condemned as a traitor to Henry the Second. After this his name was ordered to be struck out of the calendar, his bones to be degraded and burnt, and their ashes to be scattered in the air.

Sir Charles Irwin here interrupted the conversation, by observing, that as the life of Becket had occupied a considerably longer time than he had expected, he should prefer closing the discussion for that night; and deferring the account of Wolsey till the next. This arrangement was immediately assented to; and the principal remaining part of the evening was occupied with music.

SECOND EVENING.

It will be recollected that Frederic had given, as a reason for selecting the life of Cardinal Wolsey to follow that of Becket, that the characters of these two personages had many points of near resemblance. Sir Charles Irwin, on the name of Wolsey being now introduced, took the opportunity to remark, that ambition, pride, and ostentation, or a love of pageantry, were common to them both: that they had each risen from insignificant stations in life to the highest offices of the state; and that they furnish us with examples as extraordinary as any that are on record of the vicissitude of human affairs.

In reply to an inquiry from Sir Charles respecting the origin of Wolsey, Frederic stated, that he was generally believed to have been the son of a butcher, who lived at Ipswich; and to have been born there in the year 1471. Edmund, however, remarked, that some persons were of opinion his father had been a gentleman of independent fortune.

Sir Charles Irwin then inquired respecting his education?

Frederic. When very young he was sent to a grammar school; and, by the time he was twelve years of age, was admitted a member of Magdalen-college, Oxford.

Edmund. He was much younger than you.

Frederic. Nearly six years. Students are not now admitted at the universities at so early an age as they were formerly. But Wolsey was remarkably young, so much so indeed, that when he took his first degree of Bachelor of Arts, he was often distinguished by the title of "the boy bachelor." His first preferment in the church was——

Edmund. Stay, Frederic; you are omitting all account of his early life. Wolsey, when a young man, you must recollect, was induced to settle in the country

in the capacity of a schoolmaster; and it is generally believed that he wrote the Accidence that is attached to Lily's Latin Grammar. He was afterwards employed as a private tutor in the family of the Marquis of Dorset, from whom he obtained his first preferment in the church.

Mr. Allen. The marquis gave him the living of Lymington, in Somersetshire; and how did he conduct himself when he went to reside there?

Edmund. Not as a clergyman ought, certainly. His dissipated habits had induced him to go to a neighbouring fair, where he got drunk, and as a punishment was set in the stocks; a very pretty example truly to such of his parishioners as happened to have been assembled there.

Frederic. One might have hoped such conduct would have been punished by his being degraded, and not suffered to continue a clergyman.

Mr. Allen. But this was not the case. It appears in no respect even to have impeded his preferment.

Sir Charles. Wolsey's greatest anxiety about this time seems to have been, how he could gain admittance at court.

Frederic. It was; for he had often been heard to say, that "if he could but set one foot there, he would soon introduce his whole body." Such were his talents, and so great his ambition, that he shortly afterwards accomplished his wishes; and notwithstanding the disgrace attached to his former conduct, was admitted into the confidence and favour of King Henry the Seventh.

Sir Charles. Henry employed him as a confidential agent in settling some points relative to his marriage with Margaret of Savoy, who then resided at Bruges. Do you recollect a singular anecdote that has been told relative to this embassy?

Frederic. I do, perfectly. Henry had directed Wolsey to proceed to the continent without delay; and three days afterwards was astonished to see him still at court. He began to reprove him with severity.

Wolsey informed the king that he had returned from Bruges, after having successfully terminated the negociation with which he had been entrusted.

Edmund. To have been so expeditious, and at the same time so successful, must have given great satisfaction to Henry, at least as far as it respected the apparent anxiety of Wolsey to promote his views.

Mr. Allen. At the death of the king, were not all the ambitious projects of Wolsey terminated?

Frederic. Indeed, sir, they were not; for Henry the Seventh having been succeeded by his son, then only eighteen years of age, Wolsey soon contrived to attain an entire ascendency over him. He was at once submissive and enterprising: he sung, he laughed, he danced with all the dissipated characters of the court; and humoured every vicious propensity of his master. This he soon found was the path to the highest preferments in the church, and the most important offices of the state.

Sir Charles. What were the chief preferments and offices that he obtained?

Frederic. Henry the Eighth created him Archbishop of York; and permitted him to hold at the same time the bishoprics of Durham and Winchester. He was afterwards made High Chancellor; the pope named him his legate or ambassador; and completed his exaltation by creating him a cardinal.

Mr. Allen. What is a cardinal?

Frederic. An ecclesiastic of the church of Rome, a member of the conclave or college that is invested with the power of electing the pope, and performing other high offices in the Romish church.

Sir Charles. At this period of his history, I am sure you must have noted many circumstances in the conduct of Wolsey similar to those of Thomas à Becket.

Frederic. I have remarked several, but none more extraordinary than those that relate to the ostentation exhibited in his household and establishment. The former consisted of eight hundred persons, many of

whom were knights and gentlemen of fortune; and even some of the nobility allowed their sons to bear offices in his family as domestics. On his promotion to the chancellorship, he added to his former parade four footmen with gilt pole-axes, a gentleman to carry the great seal before him, and an additional train of attendants, who rode on horseback, while he himself was mounted on a mule, caparisoned with crimson velvet. In this state he went every Sunday from his residence of York-house, now Whitehall, to the court at Greenwich.

The walls of the chief apartments in his palaces were hung with cloth of gold. He had a complete service of solid gold; and in his chambers were several large tables wholly covered with plate. A thousand pieces of fine linen are stated to have been found among the contents of his wardrobe; and all his other goods and furniture were sumptuous in proportion.

Mr. Allen. Thus ostentatious, we may presume that the cardinal had no small dislike to see even any attempt to rival him in his pageantry.

Frederic. This I think was evident in many instances, but certainly so in one. Cardinal Campeggio, who had been sent from the pope on important business to the court of England, wished to make a splendid entry into London. He applied to Wolsey, who supplied him with many mules richly caparisoned, and handsome trunks to convey his baggage. Unluckily however for him, it was so contrived that as the procession paraded along the streets, one of the mules should be thrown down; and the chests upon his back flying open exposed to view, not as might have been expected, rich copes and embroidered vestments, not golden chalices and massy plate, but old shoes, worn-out stockings, tattered clothes, and the most offensive kinds of trash. The populace was much diverted with so singular an exposure of poverty, under an affectation of splendour; and Wolsey himself is believed to have been highly delighted with the success of his contrivance.

Sir Charles. It appears that Wolsey was now at the summit of his glory: it might be supposed that his ambition was fully satiated, and that there was no higher stations that he could look forward to than those which he now held. He was caressed and flattered by most of the powers of Europe. And by presents from foreign courts, and the unlimited munificence of his own sovereign, his revenues are supposed to have fallen little short of the revenues of the crown.

Frederic. Yet he was not contented, for he entertained hopes, through the influence he possessed, of succeeding to the popedom, on the first vacancy that occurred.

Mr. Allen. But he found himself disappointed. On the contrary, like an idol set up by fortune, he was hurled almost in an instant from all his greatness, and reduced to a condition infinitely more wretched than that from which he had originally sprung. Edmund can probably relate the account of his downfall.

Edmund. I will endeavour to do so, sir. The king having conceived an affection for a young lady of the court, the daughter of Sir Thomas Boleyn, determined to obtain a divorce from his queen, for the purpose of marrying this lady. Wolsey endeavoured to dissuade him from it, and by so doing lost the favour of his master. His numerous enemies now exerted all their influence to prejudice the king against him; and they succeeded so far as to induce Henry to send two noblemen to demand that he should deliver up to them the Great Seal.

Mr. Allen. This, in other words, was to deprive him of the chancellorship. What was Wolsey's reply?

Edmund. He told them, with manly fortitude, that "as he had received the seal from his majesty's hands, into those alone it should be delivered." But Henry, on the following day sent in a manner so peremptory that he was compelled to surrender it.

Mr. Allen. The king, however, after a little while, began to think this treatment of his former favourite

somewhat too harsh; and sent to him a ring, in token that he had not quite forgot him.

Edmund. He did so, and the consequence on the part of Wolsey was an instance of meanness in adversity, as great as his insolence had often been in prosperity. He sprang from his horse, and fell on his knees in the muddy road that he might receive the inestimable gift with due respect.

His enemies, however, proved too powerful; and the fallen cardinal at length finding it vain to hope for any favourable change in his circumstances, summoned all his officers before him. With the utmost coolness he ordered an account to be taken of his whole property; and the several moveables having been arranged in an extensive gallery of his house, and the chamber adjoining, he directed them all to be left there for the use of the king.

Sir Charles. And how, Edmund, was he circumstanced after this?

Edmund. He now severely felt the weight of poverty. He was banished from the court to his house at Esher, in Surry. Here he, who a little while before had possessed apparently exhaustless treasures, was suffered to continue for three weeks without a bed, a table-cloth, or even a dish to eat his meat from. He had no money, and might even have perished with hunger, had it not been for supplies that were sent him by the country people, who commiserated his misfortunes.

Sir Charles. But he was still permitted to retain some of his former dignities.

Edmund. Yes; he had not been deprived of the Archbishopric of York, but it does not appear that he was able at this juncture to obtain any pecuniary advantages from it; for when ordered, as was shortly afterwards the case, to retire to the archiepiscopal seat at Cawood, near York, his journey was for some time delayed, from want of money to defray the expenses of it.

Sir Charles. And was he suffered to pass the remainder of his days in peace?

Edmund. No. He had not long been there before he was arrested on a charge of high treason. To answer this charge it was requisite he should return to London; and he died on the journey.

Sir Charles. You are able, no doubt, to relate the particulars respecting his death. They were not only in themselves extraordinary, but they afford a very impressive lesson of the miseries to which ambitious men are subject.

Edmund. The cardinal had travelled as far south as Leicester; and, in an enfeebled state of body, arriving at the gate of the monastery near that town, the abbot and monks came out in a body to meet him. They received him with every external mark of respect. The cardinal could merely say, "Father Abbot, I am come to lay my bones among you." He continued on the mule that he had ridden till he came to the stairs leading to a chamber appointed for his reception; and he was then with much difficulty conducted up stairs to bed.

This was on Saturday, the twenty-fifth of November, 1530; and on the Monday following his disorder had so far increased, that in the general opinion of his attendants he could not long survive. On Tuesday he conversed for a little while with Sir William Kingston, concerning the events of his life, and terminated the conversation, by exclaiming in agony, "Had I but served my God as faithfully as I have served the king, he would not have given me over in my grey hairs; but this is the just reward that I must receive for my indulgent pains and study, not regarding my service to God, but only to my prince." His speech soon afterwards failed him, and he died the same night, about eight o'clock.

His body was laid in an open coffin with the face uncovered, that every one who choose it might be

permitted to view him; and, early in the morning of St. Andrew's day, it was buried in one of the chapels of the abbey.

Mr. Allen. Thus fell one of the most ambitious men, and at the same time one of the ablest ministers of state that ever lived. In our short discussion it has been impossible to enter into his merits as a statesman, but it is well known, that during his administration England became a country formidable to all the powers of Europe. With respect to his private character, he was proud and haughty in prosperity; and for some time at least, abject and cowardly in adversity. His vices were of the most disgraceful kind; but it is acknowledged that he was an encourager of learning, that he patronized and cultivated the polite and useful arts; and was undoubtedly a liberal friend to the poor.

Here Sir Charles terminated the discussion, and proposed that it should be resumed on the ensuing evening.

THIRD EVENING.

EDMUND next proposed the life of SIR THOMAS MORE; stating, that he had been chancellor in the reign of Henry the Eighth, and had succeeded Cardinal Wolsey in that office. Frederic recollected that he was the son of Sir John More, a person of great reputation in the law; and afterwards one of the judges of the court of Common Pleas: that he had been born in London in the year 1480; and that after the usual education in the University of Oxford, he had studied in one of the inns of court. To a remark from Mr. Allen, that he had not been very partial to the profession of the law, Frederic replied that he had not, and that his propensity was strongly towards a monastic

life. He said, that notwithstanding his father's anxious desire that he should become eminent at the bar, and the success which for some time had attended his practice in the law, More subsequently declined that profession; and, till the death of Henry the Seventh, lived in retirement.

Sir Charles. How was his time chiefly occupied in this retirement?

Frederic. He applied himself with great assiduity to acquire a knowledge of the French language, history, mathematics, and general literature.

Edmund. But early in the reign of Henry the Eighth he was induced to leave his retreat. His talents recommended him to the notice of that monarch, by whom he was knighted, successively promoted to several high offices in the state; and at length, on the disgrace of Cardinal Wolsey, to that of chancellor.

Mr. Allen. Henry, fickle as he was in his general conduct, seems to have entertained a very sincere regard for Sir Thomas More.

Edmund. He did; for of all his servants none appear to have been treated by him with so much kindness and good humour as he.

Frederic. The cheerfulness of his temper, and his general fund of wit, as well as of good sense, rendered his company in general highly acceptable to the king. At times, Henry would take him to the leads of his palace, to be instructed in the variety, the courses, and the motions of the heavenly bodies. He would also order him to be sent for in an evening to make himself and the queen *merry* at supper. But this after awhile occurred so often, that Sir Thomas, it is said, could not even once a month obtain permission to pass an evening with his wife and children, whom he tenderly loved; nor be absent from the court for two days successively. He consequently became uncomfortable at the restraint, and, by gradually dissembling his cheerfulness, at last recovered the command of his leisure.

Edmund. I have read that on one occasion, the

king came unexpectedly to his house at Chelsea and dined; and, that after dinner, he walked with him in his garden for nearly an hour, having, during the whole time, his arm thrown carelessly round Sir Thomas's neck.

Mr. Allen. An anecdote has been related concerning this familiarity, which shows the opinion that Sir Thomas More, even thus early, entertained of the character of Henry. As soon as the king was gone, Mr. Roper, son-in-law of Sir Thomas, remarked how happy he ought to esteem himself in being thus favoured by the king. "It hank our Lord," he replied, "I find his grace my very good lord indeed, and I believe he doth as singularly favour me as any subject within this realm. However, son Roper, I may tell you I have no cause to be proud thereof; for if my head would win him a castle in France, it would not fail to go."

Lady Irwin. How severe a reflection on the fickle and unprincipled character of Henry was this!

Sir Charles. Mr. Allen has related an anecdote proving the correct judgment of Sir Thomas More: I will give you an extraordinary one of his presence of mind. He was one day standing on the leads of his house, when an insane person, without having been observed by any one, went up to him. The man, who was stout and of athletic form, was about to seize and throw him over the parapet, crying, "leap, Tom, leap." Sir Thomas, unable to struggle with one so much stronger than himself, and having accidentally a little dog with him, had recourse to stratagem. "Let us throw the dog down first," said he, "and see what sport that will make." The man assented, and the dog was thrown down. "Is not that fine sport?" observed the chancellor; "Let us now fetch him up and try it again." The man went down with that intention; on which Sir Thomas fastened the door, and called for assistance.

Edmund and *Frederic.* It was indeed an admirable contrivance.

Sir Charles. Do you recollect, Edmund, how he is

said to have conducted himself in his capacity of chancellor?

Edmund. I do, sir, perfectly. It was remarked, that Wolsey's pride had rendered him almost inaccessible to any except persons in the higher ranks of life; but of More it was said, that the meaner the persons were who came before him, the more attentively he heard their business, and the more readily he dispatched it. His integrity as chancellor was universally acknowledged.

Sir Charles. He was undoubtedly a man of great worth and integrity; and although he lived much at court, and was of cheerful and animated disposition, he nevertheless retained a deep sense of religion. Besides his private prayers, it was his constant custom to read the Psalms and the Litany with his wife and children every morning; and at night, with his whole family, to read in his chapel the Psalms and Collects. It was his undeviating practice to spend some part of every day both in study and devotion.

Mr. Allen. Notwithstanding all this, it must be acknowledged, even by greatest admirers, that he displayed on many occasions an highly culpable hostility towards those who differed from him in religious opinions. He was a rigid Papist; and partook, to such an extent, in the prosecution of the reformers of the church, that he can only be excused on the principles of conscience, and his general good character.

Wolsey had formerly given offence to Henry the Eighth on the subject of his divorce, for the purpose of marrying Anne Boleyn; and now it was the misfortune of More to do the same.

Frederic. He certainly must have been a very conscientious man: for rather than assent to the wishes of the king in this particular, he voluntarily chose to surrender all his dignities; and, though he had a family wholly dependent upon him, had realized no fortune, and by this procedure was left almost without the

means of support, he retired, with unparalleled dignity, to domestic life in his house at Chelsea.

Lady Irwin. I think he might have contrived to retain at least some of his offices, for the maintenance of his family.

Sir Charles. Yes, my dear, and so did his wife, who was a worldly minded woman, and does not seem to have been a very polished one. "Tilly, vally," said she to him on hearing his determination, "what will you do, Mr. More? Will you sit and make goslings in the coals? I would that I were a man, you should quickly see what I would do! I would not be so foolish as to be ruled where I might rule."

Lady Irwin. Indeed her language was not very elegant; but what did Sir Thomas reply to so strange a rebuke?

Sir Charles. "By my faith, wife," he said, "I believe you speak truly, for I have never yet found you willing to be ruled;" and immediately changed the subject of conversation. I ought to remark, that this was not Sir Thomas More's first wife, for with her he had at all times lived in the most cordial affection.

Mr. Allen. It does not appear that his misfortunes terminated with the loss of his offices.

Frederic. No, sir, that was but a prelude to his complete overthrow; and, at last, to his execution on a public scaffold. His enemies, for every man in so elevated a station must have enemies, now used all their influence to ruin him. Numerous accusations were brought against him; but the purity and integrity of his conduct were only rendered the more conspicuous the more minutely they were examined. At last he was accused of high treason, on the ground that he had refused to take an oath respecting the succession to the crown, purposely worded in such a manner as to render it impossible for him conscientiously to take it.

Mr. Allen. All this might easily have been avoided by the persons in power, and without the least injury

to the crown, but their express object in it was effectually to ruin one whom they feared the king's still existing partiality might be induced to reinstate.

Lady Irwin. That was very wicked indeed.

Frederic. He was now committed to the tower of London, and after having been imprisoned there many months, was tried, and condemned to suffer death as a traitor.

Lady Irwin. But could the king, fickle as he was in many particulars, suffer his former favourite, the general integrity of whose character was unimpeachable, so unfeelingly to be destroyed?

Frederic. Henry certainly was anxious to save his life, and from time to time sent to him confidential persons, to induce him if possible to change his mind, under a promise, if he would do so, of a free pardon. Wearied out by their importunities, he at last told one of them that "he had changed it." The courtier hastened to the king with the news. Henry doubted the fact, and without delay sent to the tower to inquire in what particulars Sir Thomas had changed his mind. He smiled and replied, that "he had intended to be shaved before he was executed, but that he was now resolved his beard should share the same fate as his head."

Sir Charles. Thus it appears that, even under the pressure of the most afflicting circumstances, the natural cheerfulness of his disposition did not forsake him. Many proofs of this have been mentioned.

Edmund. When he was first committed to the tower, the lieutenant apologized that he was unable to accommodate him in the manner he wished without incurring the displeasure of the king. "Master lieutenant," said Sir Thomas, "when I find fault with the entertainment you provide for me, do you turn me out of doors."

Sir Charles. His wife visited him in prison; you recollect the tenor of one of their conversations. She now said she "was astonished that he, who had always

been reputed a wise man, should so play the fool as to be content to be shut up in a close and filthy prison with rats and mice, when he might enjoy his liberty and the king's favour, if he would but do as all the bishops and other learned men had done:" she told him that "he had a good house to live in, and that if he pleased he might enjoy every comfort his heart could desire." He heard her patiently, and then asked, "whether the house he was now in were not as nigh to heaven as his own?" He told her that "if he were under ground but seven years, and came to his house again, he should find those in it who would bid him begone, and tell him it was none of his. Besides," he said, "his stay in it was so uncertain, that as any man would be but a bad merchant who should put himself in danger to lose eternity even for a thousand years, so how much more if he were not sure to enjoy it even to the end of one day?"

Frederic. And he maintained the same cheerfulness of conduct at the scaffold which he had exhibited throughout his life. On ascending the stairs, he found them so weak and crazy that he was fearful of falling. He therefore addressed himself to the lieutenant for assistance. "Pray, master lieutenant," said he, "see me safe up, and as for my coming down I can then shift for myself."

Sir Charles. But this was not all.

Frederic. No, sir. A little while after he had finished his prayers he turned to the executioner, and observing him sad and dejected, told him to pluck up his spirits. "Be not afraid, man," he said, "to do your office; but as my neck is short, take great care you do not strike awry for your own credit's sake." Then laying his head on the block, he desired the executioner to stay a moment until he had put aside his beard; for "that," he observed, "had never committed treason:" and his head was severed from his body at one blow. This event took place on the fifth of July, 1535, and in the fifty-fifth year of his age.

Mr. Allen. As Sir Thomas More died under a settled hope of immortality, he no doubt thought any unusual degree of sorrow and concern improper on such an occasion as had nothing in it that could deject or terrify him.

Sir Charles. Certainly; and Mr. Addison has well remarked on this subject, that what was only philosophy in him, would have been insanity in any one who did not resemble him in the natural cheerfulness of his disposition, and in the sanctity of his life and manners.

Mr. Allen. We cannot but revere the character of this amiable and excellent man, whose erudition, literary acquirements and accomplishments, rendered him an ornament to his country; and whose fortitude, piety, incorruptible integrity, and generous contempt of riches and external honours, have elevated him to a rank equal to that of the most celebrated characters of ancient Greece or Rome. There was only wanting to him a better cause, and more freedom from weakness and superstition. As it was, he acted according to his principles and his own sense of duty: and though these may not accord with our notions of what is right, his constancy and integrity must at least be objects of our admiration.

It was remarked, in conclusion, by Mr. Allen, that Sir Thomas More was the author of several works written in Latin; particularly a "History of King Richard the Third," and a kind of political romance entitled "Utopia," both of which since his time have been translated into the English language.

FOURTH EVENING.

Edmund. THE character of Sir Thomas More affords, in many particulars, an extraordinary contrast to that of SIR FRANCIS BACON; in those points especially in which he exhibited so marked a dis-

interestedness of conduct, and so dignified a contempt of wealth.

Sir Charles. We must ever lament that a man, who for his splendid talents and extensive learning has been styled the glory and the ornament of his age and nation, should so unworthily have degraded himself as he did.

Edmund. Before we proceed with his character it may perhaps be desirable I should relate that he was the youngest son of Sir Nicholas Bacon, Lord Keeper of the Great Seal in the reign of Queen Elizabeth; that he was born in London in the month of January, 1560, and was educated in Trinity College, Cambridge.

Sir Charles. Was there any thing remarkable respecting his early years?

Edmund. When very young he displayed such unusual indications of talent, and at the same time was so assiduous in his studies, that he became the admiration of all who knew him. Queen Elizabeth was so much delighted with the solidity of his sense, and the gravity of his behaviour, that, in allusion to the office of his father, she often called him "her young lord keeper."

Sir Charles. In time he became a lawyer; and, by his talents and application, attained great eminence at the bar.

Edmund. True, sir; but this did not prevent him from studying politics and history, and attaining a knowledge of philosophy and general literature more extensive than that of any person of his own time.

Mr. Allen. From all these circumstances, and from the great influence of his father, we might have been led to imagine that even early in life Bacon would have attained some elevated rank in the state.

Edmund. This was not the case during the reign of Elizabeth. From her successor, James the First, however, he received the honour of knighthood; and was successively appointed solicitor general, a judge of the

marshal's court, attorney general, admitted a member of the privy council, and in the year 1616 was promoted to the office of lord chancellor.

Mr. Allen. As he was subsequently degraded from this high office, it may not be improper to consider a little what his conduct was before he attained it.

Frederic. Edmund has formed a very unfavourable opinion of this great man; but to me it appears that, previously to his having been made chancellor nothing more injurious has been laid to his charge than that, as most other persons would be, he was eager to obtain preferment. In many difficult circumstances he certainly acquitted himself to the general satisfaction.

Edmund. Indeed, Frederic, I wish you would point out to me a few of the instances.

Frederic. Most willingly. When he was practising as a barrister in the reign of Elizabeth, and anxiously courting the royal favour, a person whose name was Haywarde, in the hope probably of exciting disturbances in the country, wrote a book which purported to contain an account of the events of the first year of the reign of Henry the Fourth. The queen was of opinion that the contents were of a treasonable nature. She sent for Bacon to inquire of him whether passages in it could not be found, on which a charge of treason might be grounded. He frankly told her majesty he could discover nothing treasonable in the book; though it contained much that was felonious. She eagerly asked him in what particulars. Bacon replied, that the "author had committed very apparent theft: for he had stolen most of his sentences from Tacitus, the Roman historian." The queen was not satisfied with this; and afterwards imagining that Haywarde was not the writer of the book, but that it was the production of some person more powerful and more mischievous than he, proposed that by the torture of the rack he should be compelled to discover who the writer was. "Nay, madam," Bacon promptly replied, "do not

rack his person, but rack his style. Let him have pens, ink, and paper, and the help of books, and let him be enjoined to continue his story from the place where it leaves off, and I will undertake, by collating the styles, to judge whether he be the author or not."

Edmund. I could wish to have other proofs than this.

Frederic. In the very difficult and perplexed affairs of state during the reign of James the First, when he held the important office of attorney general, Sir Francis Bacon behaved with so much prudence and moderation, and with such impartiality and integrity both in that office and in parliament, that his conduct does not appear to have been called in question even by his enemies; nor has malice itself ever uttered any thing to his reproach. At this time he was not only a favourite servant of the king, but was held in great esteem by the people.

Edmund. I am not easy to be convinced of the integrity, during any part of his life, of a man, greatly as he has been esteemed on account of his talents, whose dishonesty has in some instances been proved, and whose arrogance towards his inferiors, and obsequiousness towards his superiors, have in more than one instance been rendered evident. I will relate to you an anecdote on this subject.

During the absence of James the First in Scotland, Sir Francis Bacon, then Lord Keeper of the Great Seal, as the head of the privy council, had the management of the public affairs. And how did he conduct himself? Assuming all the "pomp and circumstance of royalty" he took possession of his majesty's lodgings, gave audience in the great banquetting-house, and behaved with the utmost arrogance towards his brother counsellors; he would not even open or read in public the letters of the Duke of Buckingham, the king's favourite, though these letters were stated to have required dispatch; and in some instances at least he did not condescend to answer them. But when informed that

James was on his return, how did he then demean himself? He attended two days in Buckingham's anti-chamber, sitting on a wooden chest, and on the duke's entrance he fell prostrate before him and even kissed his feet. Such was not the conduct of a man of honour and independent spirit.

Frederic. I must confess I somewhat doubt the authenticity of your story, Edmund. But you shall proceed in his history, for the end of his political life was now approaching, precipitated by means in which he had himself a considerable share: he had advised his majesty to call a parliament for the purpose of examining into and granting redress of public abuses. This did not indicate any great consciousness of guilt on the part of the adviser.

Edmund. In the course of the investigation, however, the committee appointed by the parliament reported that charges of corruption had been brought against the Lord Chancellor, then Viscount St. Albans. It was alleged that he had taken bribes from different persons to the amount of several thousand pounds.

Mr. Allen. What was the object of these bribes?

Edmund. To influence his decisions as chancellor: he partly confessed the fact, and for the offence was deprived of his office, and sentenced by the house of peers to pay a fine of forty thousand pounds, be imprisoned in the tower of London during the king's pleasure, to be rendered incapable of any office or employment in the state, and never again to sit in parliament, nor come within the verge of the court.

Will this sentence satisfy you as to the depravity of his conduct?

Frederic. In a degree, certainly. But I must give some credit to the declaration, that his ruin was partly at least occasioned by an excessive and, I acknowledge, improper indulgence which he showed towards his servants, who made a corrupt use of it; for the greater part of these bribes passed through their hands. Of this he at last became so sensible that during his

prosecution, when passing through a room where they had been sitting, he said to them, on their standing up to receive him, "Sit down, my masters; your rise has been my fall."

Edmund. Such may indeed be considered an extenuation of his crime; though you must recollect, Frederic, that his connivance at the extortions of his servants was one of the charges exhibited against him; and his guilt cannot much be lessened by a supposition that the support of their extravagance led him to his other acknowledged acts of venality.

Sir Charles. The downfall of this great man, under any circumstances, affords an important lesson to ambition and extravagance. But, Edmund, proceed with his history.

Edmund. The king soon released him from the tower, made a grant of his fine to trustees for his benefit, settled upon him a pension of £1800 a year, and granted him a full pardon. But as he applied the greatest part of his income to the payment of debts contracted while he was in office, he lived in a deplorable state of poverty in a lodging in Gray's Inn.

Frederic. Notwithstanding this, many instances have been recorded of his greatness of mind and self-command. Among others it is said, that having one day received from a friend an account of the failure of an application to the king for some important favour, at the moment when he was dictating to his chaplain an account of some philosophical experiments, he calmly replied, "Be it so!" Then dismissing his friend with thanks for his services, he turned to the chaplain, saying, "Well, sir, if that business will not succeed, let us go on with this which is in our power;" and continued to dictate to him for several hours, without either hesitation of speech, or apparent interruption of thought.

Mr. Allen. Sir Francis Bacon in his distress must have experienced great consolation from religion; for he had been a Christian from conviction. From this

time his bodily infirmities increased. He now plainly perceived he had not much longer to live. By the severe winter of 1625 his health was greatly injured; but the spring reviving his spirits, he made a little excursion into the country, to try some experiments in natural philosophy. Here being suddenly taken ill, he expired after a week's indisposition, on the ninth of April, 1626, in the sixty-seventh year of his age.

Frederic. Mr. Addison has remarked, that Sir Francis Bacon possessed at once all those extraordinary talents which were divided amongst the greatest authors of antiquity; and that we are at a loss which most to admire in his writings, strength of reason, force of style, or brilliancy of imagination.

Sir Charles. Of what did these writings consist?

Frederic. Of dissertations, treatises, and essays on various subjects, philosophical, moral, political, and historical. They have all lately been collected and published, in ten volumes, in octavo.

Mr. Allen. With respect to the character of Bacon, we must ever lament the moral defects that were interwoven with his intellectual excellencies. But in fact the nobler his conceptions were, the more culpable was his obliquity of conduct; and from this mortifying instance of human frailty, we ought to draw the instructive inference, how greatly superior the pursuits of intellect are above those of ambition. Had Bacon been contented to be a philosopher, without aspiring to the honours of a statesman and a courtier, and had that sense of religion, which appears to have been prevalent in his mind, had its due weight over his conduct, he would beyond all comparison have been a greater, a better, and a happier man than he was.

FIFTH EVENING.

THE next life proposed for discussion was that of EDWARD HYDE, EARL OF CLARENDON, well known as the author of a "History of the Great Rebellion," in the reign of Charles the First.

Edmund. The different accounts that I have read concur in representing Lord Clarendon to have descended from an ancient family, and to have been born in Wiltshire in the year 1608. He was educated first in the country, afterwards at Magdalen Hall, Oxford; and lastly, he studied the law under his uncle, Sir Nicholas Hyde, in Lincoln's Inn.

Mr. Allen. Did he not suffer much from illness in the early part of his life?

Frederic. He did; but this eventually proved of benefit to him.

Mr. Allen. In what respect?

Frederic. His illness had, in some degree, been occasioned by dissipated habits that he had acquired whilst in college; and during its continuance he was induced to reflect on the misery that would follow from indulgence in such habits, and at length to cease from them.

Mr. Allen. That was wisely done.

Frederic. And as vicious society had nearly proved his ruin, he was resolved for the future to associate only with the upright and the good; and instead of always desiring, like men of low habits, to be at the head of their company, he was never so proud as when he was the lowest of his party. His wisdom was conspicuous in many particulars.

Edmund. I think it was so when, on his business as a lawyer increasing to a great extent, he determined not to sacrifice to the desire of wealth those relaxations without which life would have lost its sweetest charms. Even when his mornings were occupied in courts of law, and most of his afternoons were engaged in pre-

paring for them, he still contrived to find time, in the evenings and night, for relaxation and the study of general literature.

Sir Charles. He was fond of the enjoyments of social life.

Edmund. Few persons appear to have been more so.

Mr. Allen. Consequently he had the greater merit for resisting the temptations that might have led him to enter into them so deeply as to have broken in upon his studies. Many young men would have been induced, by similar inclinations with his, to have become dissipated, and thus to have ruined not merely their prospects in the world, but even their health and their happiness.

Sir Charles. Another circumstance has been mentioned to the credit of Mr. Hyde at this period of his life.

Edmund. I know to what you allude, sir: that he never courted the company of the great, either by improper compliances or by degrading flatteries; that he scorned to dissemble his opinions, even where he knew they would prove unacceptable; but that he chose rather to acquire reluctant respect by his honesty, than less creditable favour by servility.

Mr. Allen. This was admirable conduct. But what on the other hand has been said? That he was proud, passionate, and disputatious——

Edmund. True; but allow me to conclude your sentence, by stating that, at length, he so completely subdued the infirmities of his temper, that he became distinguished both for courtesy and affability.

Sir Charles. As Mr. Hyde had shortly to act a conspicuous part in the affairs of state, it is an important point that we should be informed what was his general character.

Frederic. Of that I can inform you, sir. Himself a Christian from conviction, he was conscientiously zealous to promote the cause of Christianity. As to his peculiar tenets, he was firmly attached to the doc-

trines and worship of the established church. His integrity was unblemished, his friendship strong, and his personal attachment to Charles the First, aided by a conviction in his own mind of the justice of his cause, induced him to adhere to that monarch through all the reverses of his life.

Sir Charles. After the death of the king what befel him?

Frederic. Resident in Paris, he was reduced to great distress. He has assured us that one winter he had "neither clothes nor fire to preserve him from the severity of the season; that he wanted both clothes and shirts; and that the Marquis of Ormond was in no better condition than himself." He further states, that they owed for all the meat they had eaten (at an obscure chop-house) for three months, to a poor woman who was no longer able to trust them; and he adds, "my poor family at Antwerp, which it breaks my heart to think of, is in as sad a state as I am; and the king (meaning Charles the Second) as bad as either of us."

Mr. Allen. Notwithstanding this he continued to maintain the same upright conduct; and, while some of the king's followers were with their religion renouncing their country, and others in greater number were making their peace with the existing government, Mr. Hyde regarded each of these measures as degrading and dishonest. His wife, with a magnanimity worthy of such a husband, was, in the mean time, supporting herself and her family at Antwerp with the most rigid economy.

Sir Charles. But why had he been separated from his family?

Frederic. Because he had been in attendance on the young king; but his presence becoming no longer requisite, he joined his family at Antwerp, and they afterwards removed to a house which they were allowed to occupy rent-free at Breda. His fidelity caused the king (though England was still in the power

of an usurper) to appoint him Lord Chancellor, an office which he at first rejected, from a notion that, in the present state of affairs, it was unnecessary.

Edmund. The death of Cromwell, with the various consequent revolutions, at length brought about the restoration of Charles the Second. The chancellor was now created a peer of the realm, by the title of Baron Hyde; and in the following year he received the further dignity of earl, and was styled Earl of Clarendon.

Frederic. I am inclined to consider Lord Clarendon as, on the whole, a man of integrity; but his temporizing conduct in the reign of Charles the Second, relative to the dissipation of the court, was certainly very unbecoming.

Sir Charles. Relate the particular circumstance, Frederic, on which you have founded this opinion.

Frederic. Charles, it is well known, was a thoughtless and dissipated character himself, and his principles soon infected so many of his nobility, that at length the excessive dissipation into which the court fell became the subject of public animadversion. Charles could not endure that his vices should be the current topic of discourse, and applied to the chancellor to devise some remedy for this growing evil. Clarendon agreed that it ought to be repressed; and instead of assuring his master that the reformation of his own conduct was the most effectual mode of silencing the clamour of the people, complaisantly proposed two expedients. One of these was to suppress the coffee-houses where the subject was chiefly discussed, the other was to employ spies, who should accuse and bring to trial such persons as spoke the most licentiously. The privy council, however, wisely rejected them both.

Edmund. I allow that his conduct on this occasion was very blameable, and am sorry for it; but before we entirely condemn him, we should know how far

the king compelled him to recommend these violent measures. All must acknowledge that at least the system pursued by the chancellor in the judicial administration of the country deserves the highest praise. He exhibited a love of liberty, and filled every department with men of known talents and character. Some learned and incorruptible judges, who had sat on the bench in the time of Cromwell, were again elevated to the same situation.

Frederic. But what I have related is not all. Lord Clarendon at least gave his assent to a very rigorous and tyrannical measure against the clergy, by imposing upon them an oath that "in their judgment no oppression nor cruelty on the part of the sovereign could justify his subjects in taking arms against his authority."

Sir Charles. And what, Frederic, was the consequence of this?

Frederic. That more than two thousand conscientious ministers, refusing to take the oath, were expelled from their benefices.

Edmund. But the whole blame of this measure ought not to be imputed to Clarendon; and if it were, we cannot easily forget that those who preceded him in power, had themselves set the example by expelling a great number of conscientious clergymen, who did not choose to submit to the presbyterian discipline. Permit me further to observe, that in Clarendon's conduct we can in no instance discover the slightest principle of selfishness; and we must acknowledge that his actions at least were intended for the public good. Though his own fortune was originally inconsiderable, and though it had greatly suffered in the late commotions, he could not without the utmost difficulty be prevailed with to accept of any grants for its reparation.

Mr. Allen. It has been asserted that the king at one period entertained so high an opinion of the services of Clarendon, that he used to direct the privy council

to be summoned in this minister's bed-room, when afflicted with the gout, rather than lose the benefit of his advice in the management of public affairs.

Edmund. Such appears to have been the case; but Clarendon had soon to experience how precarious the favours of so unprincipled a monarch were. The marriage (without his knowledge) of his daughter to the Duke of York, afterwards James the Second, first gave offence to the king. A breach was thus opened for his enemies to prejudice Charles against him on other grounds; and his fall was now nearly as rapid as that of any of his predecessors in office had been. He was compelled to resign his situation of chancellor; and, to avoid an impeachment by the house of commons, was advised to escape to the continent. This he did, and an act of parliament was passed banishing him for ever from the British dominions.

Sir Charles. Do you recollect the very absurd manner in which the enemies of Clarendon contrived to prejudice the king against him?

Frederic. I do. The personal behaviour of the chancellor was accompanied by a gravity, and in some degree by a haughtiness of manner which operated, in many respects, as a constraint upon the licentiousness of the court. He sometimes presumed to advise the king respecting the impropriety of his conduct. The courtiers in consequence are known to have said to him, in several instances, whilst Clarendon was passing, "There goes your majesty's schoolmaster." The Duke of Buckingham often mimicked the chancellor in the presence of the king, walking in a stately manner with a pair of bellows before him, to represent the purse in which the great seal was kept; and Colonel Titus at the same time carrying a fire-shovel on his shoulder for the mace. This absurd merriment delighted the silly monarch; and, disgraceful as it was to his judgment, he appears to have been first led by it to desert perhaps the most faithful and upright counsellor he ever possessed.

Mr. Allen. We are now come to the close of his life.

Frederic. Clarendon retired into France, and after having lived in various parts of that country, at last fixed his residence at Montpelier, where he completed his "History of the Rebellion," and drew up those memoirs of his private views and transactions which have thrown so much important light upon the incidents and individuals of those times. After awhile he quitted Montpelier, and went to Rouen, where he died, in the month of December, 1674, and the sixty-third year of his age.

Edmund. What, on the whole, can we say respecting the character of Lord Clarendon?

Sir Charles. That he was unquestionably a lover of truth, and a sincere friend to the free constitution of his country: that he defended that constitution in parliament with zeal and energy; and on the other hand, that he opposed with equal determination those continually increasing demands of the parliament, which appeared to him to threaten the existence of the monarchy itself; desirous if possible to conciliate the maintenance of public liberty, with the preservation of public peace. His chief failing seems to have been too entire devotion to a prince who did not deserve his attachment.

His History of the Rebellion, which comprises one of the most candid accounts that ever was written of events that have occurred during the life-time of the writer, is an honourable proof of his talent. It does not contain a dry detail of facts, or a minute and circumstantial account of persons, times, or places, but by the incidental lights which it throws upon them, it makes us acquainted, as it were, with the persons themselves of whom it speaks. Lord Clarendon was decidedly a party writer, but his representations are, for the most part, fair and moderate; and a peculiar air of probity runs through his whole work.

SIXTH EVENING.

EDMUND this evening stated, that much as he had admired the character of Lord Clarendon, there had lived since his time another statesman of equal integrity, and of still greater talent. He alluded to the late WILLIAM PITT, EARL OF CHATHAM. In reply to a question from his sister, Edmund said he was the second son of Robert Pitt, Esq. of Boconnoc, in Cornwall, and that he had been born on the fifteenth of November, 1708. He further observed that he had been educated, on the foundation at Eton, and afterwards as a gentleman commoner at Trinity College, Oxford.

Frederic. Lord Chatham does not appear to have distinguished himself in early life as a scholar: he was certainly not a good Grecian.

Mr. Allen. True: but this must not be attributed to any disinclination for study, but rather to his having, even when a youth, been so severely afflicted with the gout that at last he was compelled to quit the university without taking a degree. In the hope of alleviating in some measure this distressing complaint, he was ordered to make a tour of the continent. Accompanied by a private tutor he consequently went through various parts of France and Italy; but he almost invariably employed his leisure hours in the cultivation and improvement of his mind.

Edmund. On his return he entered into the army, and became an officer in a regiment of horse; but he early discovered that "the senate and not the camp, the cabinet and not the field," were the scenes for which his abilities were best calculated. He soon obtained a seat in parliament.

Sir Charles. And what, Edmund, was his conduct in parliament?

Edmund. He usually voted in opposition to the measures of government.

Sir Charles. In whose reign was this?

Edmund. The reign of George the Second, and about twenty years before the present king came to the throne. Sir Robert Walpole was then prime minister; and he with a singular littleness of mind sought to punish the aspiring youth by depriving him of his commission in the army. But so far was this conduct from having had the effect which he expected, that it only tended to raise Mr. Pitt in the estimation of the public; and he soon afterwards became a leader or principal speaker in the house of commons on the side of the opposition.

Mr. Allen. The minister often felt the severity of his reproofs. One day in particular Horace Walpole, the brother of Sir Robert, having illiberally attacked Mr. Pitt, for what he termed the presumptuous manner in which so young a man had ventured to address that assembly, he replied, "Sir, the crime of being a young man, with which the honourable gentleman has charged me, I shall neither attempt to palliate nor deny; but content myself with hoping I may be one of those whose follies cease with their youth, and not of that number who are ignorant in spite of experience. Whether youth can be imputed to any man as a reproach I will not presume to determine; but I will say that age becomes justly contemptible if the opportunities which it brings have been passed without improvement, and if vice prevails when the passions have subsided." He proceeded to considerable length, and in a strain of eloquent invective that has seldom been equalled.

Sir Charles. On a change of ministry, in the year 1746, Mr. Pitt came into office, and was appointed a member of the privy council, and treasurer and paymaster general of the army.

Mr. Allen. In this situation he is said to have displayed great disinterestedness. Many of his predecessors in office obtained considerable emoluments in addition to their regular salary, by the large balances

of public money in their hands; but Mr. Pitt is believed, on no occasion, to have derived emolument from them. He did not long continue in office.

Edmund. He opposed some of the measures of the crown, and was dismissed; but his talents and his integrity were such that, in 1756, on the forming of a new administration, he was appointed one of the secretaries of state.

Sir Charles. What was the consequence of this arrangement?

Edmund. A degree of vigour and activity through every department of the state which astonished the people, and excited consternation in the enemies of the country. England, under the administration of Mr. Pitt, was raised from a state of depression and disgrace to the highest pitch of glory. Not a ship nor a man were suffered to remain unemployed; and Europe, Asia, and Africa, all soon felt the influence of his talents.

Frederic. A singular instance of the promptness and activity of Mr. Pitt has been mentioned, in the fitting out of a fleet for an expedition on foreign service. He directed that the ships which were requisite should all be equipped and in readiness in three weeks. Lord Anson, who was then First Lord of the Admiralty, stated that it was impossible to comply with this order; that the ships could by no means be ready in so short a time; and that he wished to know where they were going, that he might victual them accordingly. Mr. Pitt replied, that "if the ships were not at their destination by the time he had mentioned, he would lay the matter before the king, and impeach his lordship in the house of commons." This spirited menace caused an activity to which the country had hitherto been unaccustomed, and the ships were all prepared and in perfect order by the time appointed.

Edmund. In the duties of his office Mr. Pitt was

exact and diligent beyond example. He gave up his whole time to business, and none to parade. Well informed of the practicability of his orders before they were issued, he was always peremptory in insisting upon the execution of them.

Mr. Allen. It does not appear that any minister possessed more of the public confidence than Mr. Pitt. For a considerable time opposition was scarcely even heard of. Nearly all his projects proved successful; so that almost the whole navy of France was annihilated, and scarcely a colony or a settlement was left to her in any part of the world.

Edmund. After the accession of his present majesty a misunderstanding took place which induced Mr. Pitt to retire from office; but his services were acknowledged and rewarded by his lady being created Baroness of Chatham, and himself receiving an annuity of £3000; which was to be continued during his own life, that of his lady, and that of his eldest son.

Sir Charles. This excellent statesman was at all times a determined opposer of arbitrary measures; and when, in the year 1764, the question of general warrants, as it was called, was agitated in the house of commons, Mr. Pitt maintained their illegality with unusual energy. He asserted that "by such warrants the most innocent person might be dragged from his bed, and committed to prison; that all his secrets might be exposed, and his papers converted into evidences against himself. And how," he continued, "shall this be reconciled with the British constitution? It is a maxim of our law that 'every Englishman's house is his castle.' Not that it is surrounded by walls and battlements: it may be a straw-built shed; every wind of heaven may whistle round it; all the elements of nature may enter in; but the king cannot, the king dare not enter."

Mr. Allen. There was a freedom and an honesty in his speeches which must have excited the admiration

of every independent hearer; and which would never have been tolerated in an arbitrary government.

Edmund. We find him again in office during the administration of the Marquis of Rockingham. He was now removed to the house of peers, having been created Earl of Chatham, and appointed to the situation of Lord Privy Seal: this, which was the last public office that he filled, he relinquished in the month of November, 1768. He was now so much tormented by the gout, as often to be rendered incapable of public business. But in the intervals of his disorder, and sometimes even under its visitation, he exerted himself in parliament with astonishing vigour. He strongly reprobated the measures that produced the American war.

Sir Charles. It was on the 8th of April, 1778, and on a motion for the dismissal of ministers, after the American colonies had succeeded in establishing their independence, that he attended in parliament for the last time. Perhaps, Frederic, you can relate the account of his death.

Frederic. I will endeavour to do so. He entered the house in an extremely feeble and emaciated state, leaning on two friends, and wrapped in flannel. His visage was so pale and shrunk that he looked like a dying man, though there never was seen a figure of greater dignity. He rose from his seat with slowness and difficulty, leaning on his crutches, and supported under the arms by his friends. The purport of his speech is well known. The reverence, the attention, the stillness of the house while he spoke, was most affecting. At first he seemed to labour under a difficulty of utterance, occasioned by his severe indisposition; but as he grew warm in the debate, his voice rose, and was as harmonious as ever. He recited the whole history of the American war; of all the measures to which he had objected, and all the evils he had predicted; and declared "that he would rather be in his grave than see the lustre of the British throne

tarnished, the dignity of the empire disgraced, the glory of the nation sunk to such a degree as it must be under the acknowledgment by Great Britain of American independence." The Duke of Richmond addressed the house in reply; and Lord Chatham rose to answer him. His whole soul seemed agitated; but his feelings proved too strong for his debilitated constitution to sustain: his strength failed, and he fell backwards in a convulsive fit. He was instantly supported by those that were near him, and every one was anxious to yield him assistance. The windows were thrown open to give him air; the house adjourned, and he was carried to the residence of a Mr. Sergent in Downing-street. From thence he was removed to his seat at Hayes in Kent, and was placed in his bed, from which he never afterwards rose. He died on the eleventh of May, 1778, in the seventieth year of his age, and about a month after his attack in the house of lords.

Mr. Allen. The remains of Lord Chatham, in testimony of the eminent services he had rendered to his country, were interred at the public expense in Westminster Abbey, where a monument was afterwards erected to his memory. An annuity of £4000 was also granted to his heirs.

Sir Charles. I will read you the character that Lord Chesterfield has drawn of this venerable statesman: it appears to have been the result of close and candid observation. "His private life was stained by no vice, nor sullied by any meanness. All his sentiments were liberal and elevated. His ruling passion was an unbounded ambition, which when supported by great abilities, and crowned with great success, makes what the world calls 'a great man.' He was haughty, imperious, impatient of contradiction, and overbearing; qualities which too often accompany, but always clog great ones. He had manners and address; but one might discern through them too great a consciousness of his own superior

talents. He was a most agreeable and lively companion in social life, and had such a versatility of wit that he would adapt it to all sorts of conversation. He had also a most happy turn for poetry, but he seldom indulged, and more seldom avowed it. His eloquence was of every kind, and he excelled in the argumentative, as well as the declamatory way. But his invectives were terrible, and uttered with such energy of diction, and with such dignity of action and countenance, that he intimidated those who were the most willing, and the best able to encounter him."

Mr. Allen. Lord Chatham appears to have entertained correct sentiments on the subject of religion. In one of his letters to his nephew (afterwards Lord Camelford), whilst a student in the University of Cambridge, he says, "If you are not right toward God, you can never be so toward man. 'Remember thy Creator in the days of thy youth,' is big with the deepest wisdom. 'The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom; and an upright heart, that is understanding.' This is eternally true, whether the wits and rakes of Cambridge allow it or not: nay, I must add of this religious wisdom, 'her ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace.' Hold fast, therefore, by this sheet-anchor of happiness, religion: you will often want it in the times of most danger, the storms and tempests of life. Remember, that the essence of religion is a heart void of offence toward God and man; not subtile speculative opinions, but an active vital principle of faith!"

SEVENTH EVENING.

Sir Charles. Who have we next for discussion, Frederic?

Frederic. Three of the most eminent statemen of modern times, Mr. Burke, Mr. Pitt (the son of Lord Chatham), and Mr. Fox.

Mr. Allen. Then I suppose we shall have a somewhat animated debate.

Edmund. I know not how that may be, sir; but it is certain that Frederic and I differ very much respecting the merits and character of all three; but particularly respecting those of Mr. Pitt and Mr. Fox.

Sir Charles. I have no objection to that. We shall soon hear what you each have to say. And first we must speak of Mr. Burke; he having lived somewhat earlier in point of time to the other two. As usual, Frederic, we must inquire respecting his birth and education.

Frederic. EDMUND BURKE was an Irishman, and born on the first of January, 1730, in the city of Dublin, where his father was an attorney of extensive practice, and great respectability. He was sent when young to an academy at Ballytore, near Carlow. Here, under the tuition of an excellent master, he devoted himself to study with great ardour and industry; and was soon known as the best capper of verses in the whole school.

Lady Irwin. Capper of verses, Frederic, what is that?

Mr. Allen. The capping of verses is repeating any one line out of the classics, and following it by another beginning with the same letter with which the former line ended. This is sometimes carried on, in the way of literary contest between two boys, and causes an emulation for reading which is above the ordinary line of duty, and at the same time calls out and strengthens the powers of the memory. It seems that Burke not only took the lead in this, but in all general exer-

cises; and was considered the best Greek and Latin scholar in the school.

Frederic. I was amused with an anecdote which shows the great versatility of his genius even when very young. The boys were one day permitted to have a holiday to go to the assizes at Carlow, and see the procession; but the condition of this holiday was, that the senior boys should each write in Latin verse an account of what they had seen. Burke not only wrote his own, but the exercises of several of the other boys. One of them however applied too late to allow of his bestowing any serious attention on his exercise, particularly as nearly all his ideas had been exhausted, by the multiplicity of the exercises he had written. He tried to obtain some hints from the youth in question, but found he could recollect few other objects than a fat piper, in a brown coat. Burke accordingly began in doggrel Latin,

> "*Piper erat fattus qui brownum tegmen habebat:*"

and went on with great fluency through many verses in the same style.

Edmund. In his sixteenth year he was admitted a scholar of Trinity College, Dublin. Here, amongst other studies, he paid particular attention to those of moral philosophy, logic, and metaphysics; but while employed in obtaining knowledge to render himself useful, he did not neglect the means of making himself agreeable, in the intercourse of life.

Mr. Allen. To the learning of a scholar he added the manners of a gentleman; and he became as much admired for his pleasing conversation and habits of life, as for the force and brilliancy of his genius and the depth of his knowledge.

Sir Charles. How long did Mr. Burke continue to reside in Ireland?

Edmund. Only until he was twenty-three years of age. He then came to London, and was admitted a student of the Middle Temple; where, as in every other situation, he studied with unremitting diligence.

Mr. Allen. It is much to his credit that, during the whole of his youth, he was eminent for temperance. He indulged in no vicious propensities, and was an example to others of the advantages that may be derived from united steadiness and application.

Frederic. For some time after he was settled in London, he occupied his leisure hours in writing for different periodical works; and his literary fame is said to have been completely established by his publication, in 1757, of a work entitled "An Essay on the Sublime and Beautiful." In the following year he projected the plan of an "Annual Register" of the civil, political, and literary transactions of the times. This work was established and carried on for several years, either by Burke himself, or under his immediate inspection.

Edmund. How delightful must have been the society of a person so well informed as Mr. Burke.

Mr. Allen. He was indeed the admiration and delight of every company. Dr. Johnson used to say of him, that he was the only man whose common conversation corresponded with the general fame he had obtained by his writings. "Take up whatever topic you please," he observed, "Burke is always ready to meet you. If a man were by chance to go at the same time with Burke under a shed, he would say, 'this is an extraordinary man;' if he should go into a stable and see his horse drest, the ostler would say, 'we have had an extraordinary man here to-day.'" Dr. Johnson also asserted, "that he never was in company with Burke without coming away wiser than when he went."

Frederic. The time was now approaching when the talents of Mr. Burke were to be displayed on the great political theatre. The Marquis of Rockingham, who was at the head of the administration, appointed him his private secretary; and, not long after this, he was elected a member of parliament. Here he exhibited not only great powers of eloquence, but an astonishing

fund of information on every topic that he undertook to illustrate. He was soon considered at the head of the Rockingham party in the house of commons; and his great assiduity in preparing business for discussion, joined to his talents for speaking and writing, fully qualified him for whatever he had to perform.

Edmund. Notwithstanding this, so extremely versatile was his mind, that, in the intervals of business, he could amuse himself with playing at tee-totum or push-pin with children; or with entering into their thoughts and feelings, in the histories of Tom Thumb and Jack the Giant-killer.

Sir Charles. It has been remarked, that, in these pastimes, he would often speak for a considerable while in such a way that no one would imagine him more than an ordinary man, good humouredly amusing his young auditors; when perhaps some observation or suggestion might call his attention, on which a remark of the most profound wisdom would escape him, and then he would return to his tee-totum.

Edmund. Part of the summer he frequently devoted to visiting his native country, or occupied in travelling through different parts of England. He sometimes went in stage-coaches, and was always found a most agreeable companion. He knew the history, physical and moral, of every place through which he passed, and never failed to entertain his fellow-travellers with pleasing or useful anecdotes or remarks, according to their several capacities or inclinations.

Frederic. A lady that once came in a coach with him from Yorkshire, without knowing, at the time, who he was, said that he astonished the passengers by his great fund of local knowledge, and by the anecdotes with which his conversation was interspersed; and that they all concurred in thinking him the most entertaining man they had ever travelled with.

Sir Charles. The ardent thirst which Mr. Burke had for the attainment of knowledge showed itself on almost every occasion.

Frederic. Pray, Mr. Allen, repeat the story that you once told me of his visiting the collieries.

Mr. Allen. An Irish trader happening to be in a company where Dr. Johnson and some other friends of Burke were present, he was so much delighted to hear them speak in praise of his countryman, whom he had heard to be the wisest man in England, that he said to the doctor, "Give me leave, sir, to tell you something of Mr. Burke." He thus began: "Mr. Burke went to see the collieries in a distant province; and he would go down, sir, into the bowels of the earth (in a bag), and he would examine every thing: he went in a bag, sir, and ventured his life for knowledge; but he took care of his clothes, that they should not be spoiled, for he went down in a bag."

Lady Irwin. As Mr. Burke was so admirable a companion abroad, I am somewhat curious to know his conduct, and usual style of living in his own house.

Mr. Allen. He resided much at his seat near Beaconsfield, in Buckinghamshire, about twenty-three miles from London; and was remarkable both in town and country for his hospitality—an hospitality of real benevolence. There was no parade of style, no ostentatious display of side-boards, no sumptuous entertainments: but every thing was plain, substantial, and agreeable; with kind looks, kind manners, and a hearty welcome. When in London he would often insist on eight or ten persons of his acquaintance going home with him to eat mutton-chops or beef-steaks; and, on such occasions, he literally gave such dinners, to which indeed, with the zest of his company, few could be found equal. He loved a cheerful glass of wine, but never drank to excess. His conversation was always so animated and so flowing, and his spirits so exhilarated, that the wine could make no addition.

Sir Charles Irwin here remarked, that, although it was probable he might somewhat disappoint the expectations of the young gentlemen, yet, as the con-

versation would be lengthened beyond its due bounds, if the political character of Mr. Burke were to be discussed, he should merely relate, and without comment, the course of his political career.

On the dissolution of the ministry of which the Marquis of Rockingham was at the head, Mr. Burke (he observed) was disengaged from business, but, for some time, was a formidable opponent to the subsequent administrations. The measures of the administration in which Lord North was prime minister, were uniformly opposed by him, particularly those which were adopted with regard to America. The most brilliant of his speeches were made in the course of the American war; during which, however, it is almost impossible to reconcile his principles with those that he adopted on a subsequent occasion. The ministry was dissolved in 1782, the Marquis of Rockingham was again placed at the head of the government, and Mr. Burke was made a member of the privy council, and appointed paymaster-general of the forces. In this office he did not continue long; for the marquis died in the same year, and Mr. Burke once more fell into the ranks of opposition. The act for which he has been principally blamed, was his coming into office for a little while in the following year, under Lord North, all of whose measures he had formerly professed to hold even in abhorrence. This ministry soon failed; and on the late Mr. Pitt, the son of Lord Chatham, being made prime minister, Burke was again in opposition. Whilst in opposition he was appointed to conduct the impeachment of Warren Hastings, Esq. governor general of Bengal, who had been accused of various crimes, said to have been committed in that country; and in the management of this trial, Mr. Burke occasionally exhibited traits of harsh and illiberal behaviour, which are entirely at variance with his general character in private life. The most important era in his political history was that of the French Revolution. As early as the year

1772, Mr. Burke had foreseen the probable overthrow of religion and government in France; and so strongly impressed was he of the danger that might thereby occur to surrounding nations, that he could not avoid introducing his sentiments on the subject in the house of commons. When the Revolution actually broke out, he predicted that torrent of anarchy and infidelity which for many years threatened to overwhelm the whole of civilized Europe. In consequence of this he published his celebrated "Reflections on the French Revolution;" a work which roused the attention of the people, and excited a controversy which continued for some years afterwards. Mr. Burke now associated with Mr. Pitt; and, though neither soliciting, nor invited into, any public station, he continued to write, from time to time, memorials and remarks on the state of France, and on the alliance of the great powers of Europe that was formed against the new order of things in that distracted country. After this the king assigned to him a handsome pension for life.

Here Sir Charles ended. Edmund and Frederic thanked him for his recital, and he requested the former to proceed with the private history of Mr. Burke.

After the acquittal of the governor general of Bengal, said Edmund, Mr. Burke retired from the bustle of public life. He vacated his seat in parliament, and resided almost wholly at his house near Beaconsfield. He now experienced a heavy domestic affliction in the death of his son. From the beginning of June, 1797, his own health rapidly declined; and, on the eighth of July, whilst one of his friends, assisted by a servant, was carrying him into another room, he faintly uttered, "God bless you," fell back, and instantly expired, in the sixty-eighth year of his age.

Mr. Allen. You have been too concise, Edmund, in terminating the career of one of the most extraordinary men that have lived in modern times. Though the health of Mr. Burke declined so rapidly, that he

plainly foresaw the near approach of his death, his mind was unembarrassed, and his understanding operated with undiminished force and uncontracted range. He continued regularly to perform the duties of religion and benevolence. His body was in a state of constant and perceptible decay, but this was unattended by pain. The lamp of life was consuming fast, but was not violently extinguished. During his illness he frequently declared, what all his intimates well knew before, his thorough belief of the Christian religion, and his veneration for true Christians of all persuasions; but his own preference of the articles of the Church of England. In that mode of faith he had been educated, and in that he persevered through life. His end was suited to the simple greatness of mind which he had displayed through life; it was every way unaffected; without levity, without ostentation, full of natural grace and dignity. He appeared neither to wish for, nor to dread, the approaching hour of his dissolution. The last subjects of conversation with his friends were *the inculcations of practical wisdom guiding to temporal and eternal happiness.*

EIGHTH EVENING.

SIR CHARLES IRWIN.—EDMUND.—FREDERIC.

Sir Charles. We have to lament that Mr. Allen's engagements will prevent him from attending our conversations either to-night or to-morrow. The benefit of his remarks will thus be lost respecting the characters we shall next discuss. We must, however, proceed as well as we can without him. You last night said you were prepared with the life of Mr. Pitt. I may disappoint you, as I have already done with respect to Mr. Burke, by debarring political discussion, and by taking the statement of Mr. Pitt's political life

upon myself. I gave you the reason for this procedure last night; that I may prevent the conversation from becoming too much extended. We derive, as I conceive, much more real instruction from the private than the public lives of most persons.

Frederic. We shall willingly assent to any arrangement you may propose, sir.

Sir Charles. Well then; Who was Mr. Pitt?

Edmund. I will tell you, sir. WILLIAM PITT, the man who rescued his country from anarchy during the mad career of ———

Frederic. Stay, stay, Edmund. Sir Charles has forbidden our entering upon politics, and you set out with a direct political panegyric. I must request that you be called to order.

Sir Charles. Frederic is perfectly right; you must answer to the question I asked, without comment.

Edmund. I beg your pardon, sir. Mr. Pitt was the second son of the Earl of Chatham, whose life was the subject of our conversation two nights ago. He was born on the twenty-eighth of May, 1759.

Sir Charles. And his education, be so good as to inform me respecting that.

Edmund. He was at first instructed by a private tutor; but, as may easily be supposed, his illustrious father superintended his progress with a vigilant eye. He marked, with anxious solicitude, the progressive attainments of a mind, which, at a very early period of life, displayed strong indications of future excellence.

Frederic. I have been informed that, to accustom his son to that faculty of speaking which had been a principal means of his own eminence, Lord Chatham frequently made him declaim on a given topic, from the elevation of a chair or table.

Sir Charles. This I believe was the case. His progress in learning was so great that he was early sent to the university.

Edmund. Yes, sir, at an age when, with the generality of young men, much remains to be learned at

school. As soon as he had completed his fourteenth year, Mr. Pitt was entered at Pembroke Hall, Cambridge; where he was fortunate enough to engage for his tutor, Dr. Prettyman, the present Bishop of Lincoln.

Sir Charles. His conduct in college, was it not such as to afford an useful example to other young men?

Frederic. During his residence there he was distinguished alike for the closeness of his application, and the success of his efforts to render himself master of all those subjects to which his studies were particularly directed. Nor was he less remarkable for the regularity of his conduct, and for his strict attention to that discipline which is fitted for an academic life.

Edmund. As he was intended both for the bar and the parliament, his education was of course so regulated as to embrace each of these objects.

Sir Charles. A legal and a political education ought to be nearly the same; as it is impossible a man should become an able politician, without having at the same time a correct knowledge of the legal history of his country; nor indeed can any one become a good lawyer, without being perfectly conversant with its political history. It is also of importance, towards the formation of each of these characters, to obtain a full and accurate knowledge of the origin, progress, and decline of ancient states, and of the laws and constitutions of modern kingdoms, with their interests, their government, and their polity.

Edmund. The proficiency of Mr. Pitt in all these branches of study was very considerable. The quickness of his comprehension rendered the acquisition of them easy; while the interest he took in them made the impression permanent.

Frederic. It was a great happiness to him to have had such a father as Lord Chatham.

Edmund. So it was; and the death of Lord Chatham, when Mr. Pitt was only in his nineteenth year, was an inexpressible loss to him. He was thus

deprived, at this early period, of an invaluable guide and instructor.

Frederic. After Mr. Pitt left the university, he went for a little while to the continent. On his return he became a student in Lincoln's Inn; and, as soon as he was of age, was called to the bar.

Sir Charles. And did he ever practise as a barrister?

Edmund. He once went the western circuit; and his success, during this short experiment, was amply sufficient to encourage him in the pursuit of his legal career. But he had to pursue a different and a more noble path. Before he had completed the twenty-second year of his age he became a member of parliament, and, shortly afterwards, made his first speech in the house of commons, on Mr. Burke's motion for an economical reform in some of the expenses of the government.

Sir Charles. You must now allow me to take up the subject. I will speak of it as concisely as possible. On this, as on various other leading questions, Mr. Pitt espoused the cause of opposition. Young as he was, his first speech rivetted the attention of the house. He was wholly unembarrassed by the novelty of his situation, and the splendour of talents with which he was surrounded; and he delivered his sentiments with an ease, a grace, a soundness of judgment, and a classical accuracy of language, which not merely answered, but exceeded all the expectations that had been formed of him. On a change taking place in the administration, Mr. Pitt was appointed Chancellor of the Exchequer, and, not long afterwards, namely, in December, 1783, he united in himself the offices of First Lord of the Treasury, and Chancellor of the Exchequer. Thus, when only in his twenty-fourth year, he was honoured with the high rank of prime minister. This station he continued to hold more than seventeen years. He had conducted the

public affairs of the country in times of almost unexampled difficulty, and when principles subversive of religion, of order, and good government, commencing in the French Revolution, were eagerly propagated in every country of Europe. At length, however, on a difficulty occurring respecting the claims of the Roman Catholics to be placed on the same footing as members of the Church of England, he resigned his office, and was succeeded, in the month of March, 1801, by the Right Honourable Henry Addington, now Viscount Sidmouth. After somewhat more than three years had elapsed, he was recalled to his former situation; and this he held till his death.

Edmund. The health of Mr. Pitt experienced a rapid decline in the autumn of 1805, and in the month of January following, it was discovered that his illness was attended by peculiarly unfavourable symptoms. His physicians, so long as they could entertain a hope of his recovery, forbade any one to speak to him on subjects which might tend to agitate his mind. But at last, the Bishop of Lincoln, who, for some time, had been in almost constant attendance upon Mr. Pitt, obtained permission to intimate to him his dangerous state, and call his attention to religious duties.

Sir Charles. The bishop went to his bed-side, and communicated to him the melancholy tidings. On hearing them, Mr. Pitt turned to Sir Walter Farquhar, his physician, and with the most perfect composure asked, "How long do you think I have to live?" In answer to the bishop's request that he might be permitted to pray with him and administer the sacrament, he said, "I fear I have, like too many other men, neglected prayer too much to have any ground for hope, that it can be efficacious on a death-bed—but," —(rising as he spoke, and clasping his hands with the utmost fervour and devotion,)—"I throw myself *entirely* (the last word being pronounced with a strong emphasis) upon the *mercy* of God, through the merits

of Christ!" The bishop then read prayers, and Mr. Pitt joined in them, with calm and humble piety. He repeatedly expressed, in the strongest manner, his sense of his own unworthiness to appear in the presence of God, disclaiming all ideas of merit; but, with a conscience evidently clear and undisturbed, he declared that he was perfectly resigned to the will of God; that he felt no enmity towards any one; but that he died in peace with all mankind: and expressed his hope, at once humble and confident, of eternal happiness through the intercession of his Redeemer.

Frederic. I rocollect, sir, that Mr. Pitt is said to have remained sensible almost to the latest moment of his life. Early in the morning of the twenty-third of January, 1806, the anniversary of that day on which, five and twenty years before, he had first become a member of the British parliament, he expired without a struggle, and without pain. He was then in the forty-seventh year of his age.

Sir Charles. I believe it is allowed by all, that the moral conduct of Mr. Pitt was highly estimable, though he did not escape the charge of convivial intemperance. His eloquence, the quality which first brought him into notice, is said to have been more perfect than that of any other speaker in his time. It was singularly correct, copious, and varied; clear, well arranged, argumentative or impassioned as the subject required. He died possessed of the esteem and attachment of a large portion of his countrymen; and his political consequence was proved by the entire dissolution, at his death, of the ministry of which he was the head. As a statesman, the resources as well as the firmness of his mind, have been amply demonstrated by the measures he adopted to meet the various and unforeseen difficulties with which this nation was surrounded during the period of his administration. Abroad he had to struggle with the most

gigantic power that has existed in modern times; while at home he had to support, at the same time, commercial and national credit, to allay the spirit of mutiny, to extinguish the flames of rebellion, and to provide, in more seasons than one, even for the importunate calls of famine. The energies of his mind were eminently exerted upon those important occasions; and, in spite of internal distractions, he carried the power of the nation to a greater height than it had attained in any former period.

Frederic. A love of power seems to have been the ruling passion of his heart; yet I am free to confess, not only that his mind was elevated above the meanness of avarice, but that his personal integrity was unimpeached.

Sir Charles. Indeed, Frederic, Mr. Pitt was so far from making use of the opportunities which he possessed, to acquire wealth for himself, that he died involved in debts, which negligence, and the demands of his public station, rather than extravagance, had, perhaps, in some measure, obliged him to contract.

Edmund. It is creditable to his country that his remains were honoured by a public funeral in Westminster Abbey, and that a sum of money was voted by the parliament to be appropriated for the payment of his debts.

NINTH EVENING.

THE life next introduced for discussion was that of CHARLES JAMES FOX, second son of the late Lord Holland; and the great political opponent of Mr. Pitt. Frederic observed, that he had been born on the thirteenth of January, 1749; and that, even whilst a child, he had displayed an astonishing supe-

riority of talent. He further remarked, that his father, who spared no pains in his education, made it a rule to follow and regulate, but not to restrain nature. At table, whilst a boy, Charles was permitted to enter into the conversation of men, and he invariably acquitted himself to the astonishment of the company.

Edmund. It appears to me that such conduct could only have tended to render him what is called a forward boy; a kind of child which, I think, few people like.

Sir Charles. I will tell you what once happened when his father was Secretary of State, and Charles not quite ten years of age. His father had often suffered him to read the dispatches that were written on public business, and the boy one day told him that a paper he had just read was too feeble. The little fellow tore and threw it into the fire; and the secretary made out another copy, without even the slightest reprimand.

Edmund. Surely, sir, most parents would consider indulgence of this description not only excessive, but, in its tendency, highly injurious.

Sir Charles. I should certainly imagine so myself; and I should also imagine it must have impeded the progress of his education, in which regularity of application is so essentially necessary.

Frederic. Yet, whilst at school at Eton, his literary acquirements are represented to have been far beyond those of most of his contemporaries.

Edmund. I allow it; but these were not the effect of habitual application. He was indebted for them to the occasional exercise of his astonishing powers. The indulgence of his father very early led him into a strong bias for dissipation; and this was increased by his being lavishly supplied with such sums of money as even invited to extravagance.

Sir Charles. It has of late become a serious evil in public schools to allow boys so much pocket money, as often to induce habits that are injurious both to

their health and morals. The profusion of Mr. Fox was unbounded; and long before he was of age he had expended enormous sums.

Edmund. I have somewhere read that, when he was only fourteen years old, his father took him on an excursion to Spa; and, during his stay there, allowed him five guineas a night to game with.

Sir Charles. After such an anecdote it is impossible we can feel any surprise when told that, in after life, Mr. Fox had a strong propensity to gaming.

Frederic. In short, sir, we are to infer that he was brought up in lax morals, and luxurious habits. This, I trust, will at least be some apology for his subsequent character, on which my friend Edmund has no mercy. If, notwithstanding all these obstacles, he be found to have possessed good principles, the greater must have been his own merit.

Sir Charles. Certainly; and there is no saying how much better they might have been, had he been early taught the benefit of restraint.

Edmund. From Eton, Mr. Fox was sent to Hertford College, Oxford.

Frederic. And here his talents and his learning excited the admiration of all who knew him. He was a profound classical scholar, and, in literary acquirements, excelled all the young men of his own standing——

Edmund. Although his time seems to have been chiefly devoted to gaming and dissipation.

Frederic. Indeed, Edmund, you must excuse me if I do not give full credence to your assertions. I indeed, unwillingly, allow the possibility of their being in part correct, but I cannot understand how any person, be his talents what they may, can have attained the knowledge that Mr. Fox undoubtedly possessed, without great personal application. Now this application alone, must have required so much time, as to have, in a very important degree, interrupted his dissipated habits.

Edmund. I cannot reason with you, Frederic, on the subject; I only state what I have read.

Sir Charles. To terminate your contest I will take up the narrative. As a scholastic life was not the object of his father, Mr. Fox left the university without having taken a degree; and, according to the custom of that day, went abroad. He made the tour of Europe; and though we are informed that he plunged into almost every kind of excess, he acquired an extensive and profound knowledge of the constitution, laws, government, arts, and manners, of the several countries that he visited.

Edmund. Yes, sir, Mr. Fox has been compared with Alcibiades, who surpassed all of his age in the versatility of his genius, and the intemperance of his conduct.

Sir Charles. We have now to mark his rise in the political world. Devoted early to a political life, he was elected a member of parliament in 1768, when little more than twenty years of age; and, young as he was, he distinguished himself among the many eminent men then in the house of commons. His father, Lord Holland, was at that time in office, as Secretary of State, and Mr. Fox was originally what is called a Tory. At first he took the side of the administration, and was thought one of its ablest supporters. The facility with which he made himself master of a new question, and comprehended the strength, or weakness, and the tendency of a proposition or measure, his forcible mode of reasoning, his readiness of the most appropriate, significant and energetic language, soon rendered him conspicuous. At this period, holding the situation of one of the Lords of the Admiralty, and afterwards of a Lord of the Treasury, he uniformly supported the ministers, and what is termed the royal prerogative; and no one could have been more remote than he from entertaining those popular principles, as they are called, which he subsequently adopted. After the death of his

father in 1774, he became a slave to most of those passions which prove injurious to youth, especially that of gaming. These injured both his character and peace of mind; and in a little while wholly subverted his fortune. Some circumstances now occurred which led him to act in opposition to the measures of government, and he was dismissed from his office. During the whole war with America, Mr. Fox continued to speak and vote, in the house of commons, against the proceedings of the ministers. It was now that his talents appeared in their fullest lustre, and that he assumed the foremost rank amongst the speakers of that house. This conduct he continued after the breaking out of the French Revolution, strenuously opposing all the measures that were adopted in consequence of the war with France. In the house of commons, he and Mr. Pitt were constantly opposed to each other; and, on the retirement of Mr. Pitt from office, and the conclusion of the war with France in 1801, Mr. Fox and his friends gave their support to the administration. When hostilities were again meditated, Mr. Fox at first expressed his doubts of their necessity; but when, on the death of Mr. Pitt, in 1806, he came into power as one of the Secretaries of State, he found it necessary to give all his aid to support the war by the same means, and with the same spirit, as his predecessor had done. He did not however long continue in office. His health now began to decay. Symptoms of dropsy appeared, and, in a few months, he was laid in the grave.

Edmund. He died on the thirteenth of September, 1806, in the fifty-eighth year of his age; and was buried in Westminster Abbey, close by the tomb of his illustrious rival, Mr. Pitt.

Frederic. Will you oblige us, sir, by your opinion of the character of Mr. Fox?

Sir Charles. Most willingly. One of the principal features of his character was openness. His disposition was candid, liberal, and benevolent in an ex-

treme. In every part of his public, and even of his private conduct, boldness and decision were prominent. Whether the ends he pursued were useful or injurious, there was no artifice, no petty intrigue, no duplicity in the means.

Frederic. What do you think, sir, of his talents as a speaker?

Sir Charles. I think that, without the brilliancy and the varied imagery of Burke, or the elegant and florid correctness of Pitt, his eloquence possessed those qualities which can never fail to excite a powerful influence upon a popular auditory, even of the most cultivated kind. It had a fervour and animation denoting real earnestness, and occasionally bursting into passion, not acted but felt, united with the close reasoning of an acute logician, and those masterly views of a subject, which superiority of understanding alone can conceive and impart.

I must not omit to inform you, that Mr. Fox was the author of a work which was published after his death, entitled "A History of the early Part of the Reign of King James the Second."

TANJORE MAHARAJA SERFOGI'S SAR

TANJORE MAHARAJA ...

PHILOSOPHERS.

TENTH EVENING.

MR. ALLEN, having been liberated from his engagement, was now enabled to rejoin the conversations. Frederic this evening stated, that he had lately employed himself in perusing the lives of eminent British Philosophers; and observed how much information he had derived from the life of ROGER BACON.

Mr. Allen. In the course of my reading, I really have not met with any character on the whole more extraordinary than that of Friar Bacon. Though he lived in an age of comparative ignorance, and, consequently, was deprived of all those advantages which we possess, he became not merely the greatest philosopher of his own time, but was perhaps the brightest genius that Europe ever produced.

Edmund. You call him Friar Bacon, sir.

Mr. Allen. I do so, because he is generally known by that appellation. He obtained it from having been a member of a religious community denominated Friars-Minors, or Grey Friars.

Frederic. He was born at Ilchester, in Somersetshire, in the year 1214, and was first educated at Oxford.

Mr. Allen. Where he pursued his studies with an eagerness and assiduity which, at the same time that they insured success to his ultimate pursuits, obtained for him the strongest marks of favour from his instructors.

Frederic. After he had continued some years in Oxford, the scene of his education was transferred

from England to France; and at Paris, he availed himself of all the advantages that could be derived from the distinguished professors in that university.

Sir Charles. Then we must consider the extraordinary attainments for which he afterwards became so celebrated, as owing in a considerable degree, to these advantages.

Frederic. Certainly, sir; but infinitely more to his own genius, and his intense and indefatigable application.

Mr. Allen. The knowledge he acquired of Oriental and Grecian learning, in an age when a minute attention to words constituted nearly the whole of what was called erudition, is alone a proof that he far excelled all his contemporaries. We shall have to state other and more satisfactory proofs than this. But we must proceed with his history.

Frederic. Whilst he was in Paris he was advanced to the degree of doctor in divinity; and, when only twenty-six years of age, was admitted into the community of Friars-Minors. Not long after this he returned to Oxford, where he devoted himself chiefly to the study of mechanics, optics, and chemistry.

Edmund. I have somewhere read that his attempts to advance this kind of knowledge by experiment was assisted by generous contributions from various quarters; which enabled him, in the course of twenty years, to expend upwards of two thousand pounds, (at that time a large sum) in constructing instruments, collecting books, and making experiments of different kinds.

Sir Charles. The sum you mention was equal in value to more than fifty thousand pounds of the present money.

Edmund. Astonishing! His apparatus must have been very extensive indeed, though no doubt rudely constructed, in comparison with the philosophical instruments of the present day. How lamentable it is that his knowledge and intentions should have been so much misunderstood as they were.

Frederic. The bigotted friars, to whose society he

belonged, envious of his matchless honours, or fearful of his future ascendancy over them, conspired to injure his reputation, and to defeat the liberal ambition of a man whose aims, uncontaminated by secular or interested views, were exclusively directed to the advancement of the highest and most useful branches of human knowledge. They slanderously and infamously reported that he was addicted to necromancy, and to an unholy communion with demons or evil spirits.

Sir Charles. And what was the consequence of this?

Frederic. So powerful were the secret intrigues of his adversaries, that, though the heads of the university were friendly to his interest, he was condemned to a rigorous confinement, aggravated by the hardest deprivations, and uncheered by the offers of friendship. It is said that this hostility had been inflamed by the just animadversions which Bacon had been heard to pass on the gross ignorance and errors of the religious orders of that day; and by the indignant severity with which he had censured their vices.

Edmund. But the pope who had authorized his confinement died, and his successor had liberality enough to order the release of this extraordinary man. He thus obtained a temporary respite from persecution; and this interval of unmolested quiet he dedicated with fresh ardour to those occupations which, even in the midst of all his hardships, had never ceased to engage his mind.

Frederic. The pope from whom the philosopher had received this indulgence, enjoyed his dignity only three years; and after his death Bacon was seized and imprisoned in France. The perusal of his writings was at the same time forbidden. He lingered in this captivity for more than ten years; but at length regained his freedom, and once more found his way to Oxford, where, at the age of seventy eight, his labours and his vexations were terminated by death.

Mr. Allen. The astonishing acquirements of Roger

Bacon obtained for him the distinguishing appellation of *doctor mirabilis*, or the *wonderful doctor*. With what propriety this title was given, will be evident from the number and variety of his works, many of which are still extant. Nearly a hundred have been enumerated, on grammar, mathematics, physics, optics, geography, astronomy, chronology, chemistry, magic, medicine, logic, metaphysics, moral philosophy, theology, and other subjects. Besides an acquaintance with the subjects of *theology* and *metaphysics*, and a skill in *languages* far above the usual standard, Bacon was master of almost every branch of *mathematical* and *physical science*. His progress in *chemistry* was so great that he anticipated some of the proudest discoveries of subsequent times. The invention of *gunpowder* is now universally assigned to him, though it was claimed by a monk of the following century. "From saltpetre and other ingredients," he says, "we are able to form an artificial fire, which will burn at any distance we please." And speaking of the effect of this fire, he observes that, "by means of it, sounds like thunder, and the appearance of lightning, may be produced in the air, and even with more terrible effect than those which happen naturally; for a small portion of matter, about the size of the thumb, properly disposed, will make a dreadful sound, and exhibit a vast corruscation, by which a city or an army may be destroyed."

Edmund. This appears to me very surprising.

Mr. Allen. But this was only a small part of his innumerable inventions. He mentions a kind of *unextinguishable fire*, the mode of preparing which he had discovered, and which was probably a kind of phosphorus. In *mechanics* he speaks of several wonderful inventions; of vessels and carriages moved by machinery, of machines for raising vast weights, and of other for diving beneath the surface of the water, all of which he had himself formed and tried.

Frederic. I think I have read that he was the original inventor of *air-balloons*.

Mr. Allen. He certainly speaks of machines which would rise into the air.

Sir Charles. His proficiency in *optics,* when we consider the disadvantages under which he laboured, appears to me more surprising than any other part of his knowledge. He was no stranger to the use of convex and concave lenses or glasses, the laws of refraction, the formation of mirrors, and the grand invention of the telescope. He speaks expressly of the application of spherical glasses to the purposes of reading, and of viewing distant objects, both terrestrial and celestial. In his writings are also found descriptions of the camera obscura, and the burning glass.

Mr. Allen. Such was his *astronomical knowledge,* that Bacon suggested an alteration in the calendar, which, three centuries after his death, was adopted by Pope Gregory the Thirteenth. Dr. Jebb, who edited his principal work, justly styles this "one of the noblest efforts of human industry." His *geographical knowledge* may be inferred from various passages of his works, but particularly from one very curious passage, concerning the countries that lie betwixt the Danube and the eastern borders of Tartary, and which has subsequently proved correct.

Edmund. I cannot sufficiently express my astonishment at the extent of knowledge which this wonderful man possessed, and which could not possibly have been attained without the most assiduous attention, and indefatigable application to study.

Mr. Allen. He affords us a satisfactory proof how much may be effected by application, even under circumstances which, in themselves, are extremely disadvantageous. But, enlightened as he was, he was not without a considerable portion of that superstitious and visionary spirit, which marked the studies of the middle ages. One of his principal objects in the pursuit of chemistry, for instance, was to discover the *philosophers' stone,* as it was called, or a composition by which he could convert the inferior

metals into gold. It was, no doubt, in the pursuit of this that he was gradually led to attain an accurate knowledge of the properties and actions of divers kinds of natural bodies. He also partook so far of the superstition of the age, as to place some confidence in *judicial astrology*, or the mode of foretelling future events by the motions and positions of the planets; but he was a decided enemy to the imaginary arts of necromancy and magic. He wrote several treatises purposely to expose their futility, and to convince the world that they were either idle delusions, or fraudulent impositions.

Edmund. But, sir, Bacon was himself accused of having been a magician. There is a well known story of his having formed a *brazen head,* which, after seven years preparation, was to speak, and tell whether the British island might not be enclosed within a wall of brass. It is stated, that not having been regarded when it first spoke, and said, "Time is," on its speaking again, and saying, "Time was," it fell to pieces.

Mr. Allen. No calumny was ever more unjust, no story ever more absurd than this. Similar tales have been related of other philosophers of this period, but they were certainly never believed, except by the lowest and most ignorant of the people. On the whole it cannot be questioned that Friar Bacon was one of the brightest and most astonishing geniuses that the world ever produced; and, as such, will ever be entitled to very extraordinary regard. Though knowledge be now so far advanced that little information can at the present day be derived from his writings, yet respect ought ever to be paid to the memory of a man who knew more than any of his contemporaries, and who, in an age of superstition and ignorance, added new brightness to the lamp of science.

ELEVENTH EVENING.

Frederic. ONE of the most illustrious philosophers of modern times was the honourable ROBERT BOYLE, a younger son of Richard Boyle, Earl of Cork. He was born in Ireland, in the year 1627; and was committed, by his father, to the care of a plain, country-nurse, with instructions that he should be brought up in the same habits of exercise, and with the same plain diet, as if he had been her own child.

Edmund. What can have been the cause of so singular a direction?

Mr. Allen. His father had witnessed many evils arising from the indulgence of parents in rearing their children too effeminately, and was determined to have his own son brought up in such manner as to invigorate his constitution, and render him hardy.

Frederic. True, sir; but the advantages that were derived from this procedure were afterwards counteracted, by his being treated with too much tenderness.

Sir Charles. Had his father also been aware what bad habits, might be contracted by a child, under such superintendance, it is probable he would have hesitated as to the propriety of his plan; for the boy, by mimicking some children of his own age, learned to stammer; and though no endeavours were afterwards spared to correct this propensity, and though with great attention he at last could avoid it, yet he never could speak without hesitation.

Mr. Allen. Nothing can be a stronger proof than this of the injury that may follow from imitating the infirmities or bad habits of others, whether it be stammering, squinting, or any wicked propensities; for an imitation of these has, in many instances besides that of Mr. Boyle, led the imitator himself into similar habits.

Frederic. When only three years old he had the misfortune to lose his mother, a calamity which he deeply regretted during his whole life; esteeming it a peculiar unhappiness not to have known a parent so amiable and so accomplished as she is represented to have been.

Sir Charles. There is one trait in Mr. Boyle's early character that deserves the notice of all young persons. He had so strict a regard for truth, that his father never knew him to have uttered a falsehood.

Mr. Allen. If young persons were aware of the bad consequences that almost always follow the telling of untruths, I am sure no one would be guilty of so detestable a vice.

Frederic. Mr. Boyle was educated in his father's house until he was eight years of age, when, with his brother Francis, he was sent to the school at Eton. During his continuance there, several extraordinary and nearly fatal accidents happened to him. One of these was the sudden falling in of the chamber where he slept, and that when he was in bed. In this accident, besides the hazard he ran of being crushed by the timbers and rubbish, he would certainly have been choked with the dust whilst under the ruins, had he not recollected to wrap his head in the sheet, by which he was enabled to breathe without injury. When Mr. Boyle was about eleven years old, he and his brother left Eton; and, under the care of a private tutor, embarked for the continent, where they continued about six years.

Sir Charles. Are we to suppose, from his having left school at so early an age, that his education was in any degree neglected?

Frederic. Certainly not, sir; it had for a while been suspended, and necessarily so, from a violent attack of ague, but, by close application afterwards, he became a proficient in all the learned, and in many of the living languages. He also obtained a complete knowledge of the mathematics.

Mr. Allen. What has been said of his religious principles at this period?

Frederic. When only about fourteen years old, he began, as he acknowledged himself, to entertain some distracting thoughts, some mixture of doubts and difficulties, respecting the evidences of the Christian revelation.

Mr. Allen. And what was the consequence of this?

Frederic. That he continued in a state of perplexity and melancholy for many months; and that, at length, impelled by the great importance of the subject, he determined earnestly to inquire into the grounds and foundation of it.

Mr. Allen. If this inquiry were made with a sincere desire of ascertaining the truth, I have no need to ask you what was the result.

Frederic. Mr. Boyle has himself told us: he says that, "although he then believed more than he could comprehend, he conceived that he did not believe more than he could prove;" and was consequently confirmed in the truth of Christianity.

Edmund. I think I have read that, on his return to England after his travels, Mr. Boyle applied himself to study with great assiduity; and that his progress in many branches of literature, which have usually been accounted difficult and abstruse, was very surprising. He omitted no opportunity of becoming acquainted with persons distinguished for their genius and learning; and, though he was at this time very young, his merit gained him admission to men of great eminence. His diligence was the more commendable, because his health was at intervals much disordered by a complaint called the stone, to which he was subject, and to which his sedentary life might probably have contributed.

Frederic. He resided for some time in the city of Oxford, not only on account of easy access to several ingenious friends in the different colleges, but also on account of the numerous conveniences which the university afforded for the prosecution of his favourite

studies, and particularly that of experimental philosophy.

Sir Charles. Our present Royal Society had its origin in the meetings of Mr. Boyle and his friends, for the discussion of philosophical subjects.

Mr. Allen. Mr. Boyle was treated with great respect by King Charles the Second; and Lord Southampton, and the Lord Chancellor Clarendon, each solicited him to enter into holy orders, with intention, no doubt, of his being made a bishop. But this, after much deliberation, he thought it proper to decline, and upon the most disinterested motives.

Frederic. On a vacancy in the situation of provost of Eton, the king appointed Mr. Boyle to that office. But he, apprehending that its duties might interfere with his studies, and desirous of continuing a course of life which, by experience, he had found agreeable to his temper and constitution, respectfully, but resolutely, declined the appointment.

Mr. Allen. Though Mr. Boyle had an insuperable objection to enter into orders, he was at all times anxious for the promulgation of the Christian religion. One proof of this was his causing a translation to be made of the Gospels and Acts of the Apostles into the Malayan language. Of this translation he had five hundred copies printed at Oxford, and sent to the East Indies, at his own expense. He also caused Grotius's admirable work on the Truth of the Christian Religion, to be translated into Arabic, and printed and circulated in all the countries where that language was understood. He projected a translation of the New Testament into the Turkish language, and would have been at the whole expense of its publication, had it not been taken out of his hands and completed by others. He expended upwards of seven hundred pounds in an edition of the Scriptures in the native Irish language; contributed liberally to the publication of a Welsh Bible, and expended considerable sums in promoting missions for propagating the Christian religion in

various remote parts of the world. All these prove, in the most convincing manner, the sincerity of his own faith in the Christian religion.

Sir Charles. No evidence can well be more strong. Other pleasing traits in his character were his perfectly independent mind; and his entire disregard of worldly honours and distinctions. On a vacancy occurring in the situation of President of the Royal Society, that body, to evince their just sense of his worth, and of his constant and eminent services, elected him their President; but he declined this honour. It would, however, afford a very satisfactory proof of his fitness for such a situation, were I to enumerate to you his philosophical publications. These are very numerous, and exhibit evidences of intense application, and of a mind wholly given up to study, and to science.

Frederic. We now approach the close of a life valuable in an eminent degree to the world. The health of Mr. Boyle began to decline; and, though he foresaw that he could not much longer survive, he still pursued with ardour his favourite studies.

Sir Charles. He even went so far as to announce by public advertisement, that he could not now receive visits as usual; stating, among other reasons, that "he wanted leisure to arrange his papers, to supply the blanks which he had left in many of his treatises, and to repair the deficiencies of others, occasioned by the carelessness of a servant, who had spilt upon them a bottle of sulphuric acid."

Edmund. Soon after this he directed a board to be placed over his door, on particular occasions, intimating that Mr. Boyle could not then be spoken with.

Frederic. With respect to his death, he entertained no other fear, than lest the painful disease, with which he had long been afflicted, should increase to such a degree as to distract his attention from the important concerns of futurity to his own sufferings.

Mr. Allen. But, when death came upon him, it was

with so little pain that the flame of life appeared to go out merely from want of oil to maintain it. Do you recollect the date of his death.

Frederic. Mr. Boyle expired on the thirtieth of December, 1691, in the sixty-ninth year of his age; and his remains were interred in the chancel of the church of St. Martin's in the Fields, Westminster.

Mr. Allen. It was a principal object of the philosophical pursuits of this excellent man, to promote the cause of religion. This design was so deeply impressed upon his mind, that he concludes an article in his will, relating to the Royal Society, in these words: "I wish them a happy success in their attempts to discover the true nature of the works of God, and I pray that they, and all other searchers into physical truths, may cordially refer their attainments to the glory of the great Author of nature, and to the comfort of mankind." The study of the Scriptures he pursued to a great extent, and in the Hebrew and other oriental tongues. He had read so many of the writings of the Fathers, that he had formed a clear judgment of all those that are most eminent. He had also perused with attention the various controversies in religion, and was master of the whole body of divinity. Bishop Burnet, who preached his funeral sermon, says: "I might challenge the whole tribe of libertines to come here and view the usefulness as well as the excellence of the Christian religion, in a life that was entirely devoted to it."

Sir Charles. His writings were extremely numerous, and fully evince his learning and great acquirements. They are on various subjects connected with natural and experimental philosophy: on optics, mechanics, chemistry, and the Christian religion.

TWELFTH EVENING.

FEW philosophical writings, observed Mr. Allen, have attained greater celebrity than the Essay on the Human Understanding, by JOHN LOCKE. Nor is perhaps any book of the kind better adapted than this, to teach men to think with precision, and to inspire them with that love of candour and of truth which is the genuine spirit of philosophy. Sir Charles Irwin assented to this opinion, and remarked how satisfactory it was to every religious mind to know that a man of Mr. Locke's sound judgment should also have been a sincere Christian. Lady Irwin inquired if he had not written some work in defence of Christianity. On being informed that he had published a treatise on the Reasonableness of Christianity, as delivered in the Scriptures, she expressed an anxious desire to see it; remarking, that its author, having been a layman, could not be considered to have had any interested motives in writing it, and consequently could only have done so from a conviction that he was defending the truth. She said that she was in a great measure ignorant of his history, and was desirous to be informed who he was.

Frederic. He was born near Bristol, in the year 1632, and was the son of a person who had been clerk to a justice of the peace, afterwards a captain in the army of the parliament, and lastly an attorney.

Edmund. By the interest and the pecuniary assistance of friends, he was educated at Westminster School, and thence, at the age of nineteen, was removed to Christ Church, Oxford.

Frederic. But he did not obtain any celebrity on account of his talents, either at school, or in the university.

Lady Irwin. As he was a young man without fortune, I presume he was educated for some profession.

Frederic. His peculiar attention was applied to the

study of physic; but his favourite study, at this period, seems to have been that of natural philosophy.

Lady Irwin. Did he ever practise as a physician?

Frederic. He was prevented from doing so publicly, by an accidental introduction to Lord Ashley, afterwards Earl of Shaftesbury, who prevailed with him to reside in his family in a medical capacity.

Edmund. The partiality of this nobleman for Mr. Locke was so great, that, on all occasions, he showed him extraordinary respect; and, from the opportunity that he had, as a statesman, of introducing him into the world, urged him, in a particular manner, to direct his attention to the study of politics.

Sir Charles. He shortly afterwards introduced him to several statesmen of his acquaintance.

Frederic. I will tell you what happened at his first interview with three or four illustrious characters, who appear to have met at Lord Ashley's, rather indeed for amusement than for business. After a short interval, and before scarcely any conversation had passed, cards were introduced, and they sat down to play. Mr. Locke looked on for a little while, and then retiring to one of the windows, took out his note-book, and began to write with great attention. One of the noblemen inquiring as to his being thus occupied, he replied; "My lord, I am endeavouring to profit, as far as I am able, in your company; for, having waited with impatience for the honour of being in an assembly of the most eminent geniuses of this age, and having, at length, attained this honour, I thought I could not more profitably occupy my time than by writing down the conversation; and I have here noted the substance of what has been said during the last hour or two."

Lady Irwin. And what was the consequence of this rebuke?

Frederic. They appear to have taken it in good part; for, quitting their play, they passed the remainder of the time in a more rational manner.

Edmund. Lord Ashley's high opinion of Mr. Locke

is fully shown by his having requested him to superintend the education of his eldest son, a youth at that time about sixteen years of age. He was subsequently private tutor to the son of this pupil, the Lord Shaftesbury, who was the author of a well known work entitled "Characteristics of Men, Manners, Opinions, and Times."

Lady Irwin. There are, I am informed, many objectionable doctrines in this work. How happened it that Mr. Locke did not instil into his mind better principles?

Edmund. It is to be presumed that he attempted to do this; and why he failed of success does not appear to have been recorded, further than that we are informed his philosophy did not give entire satisfaction to Lord Shaftesbury.

Lady Irwin. I should much like to know what were the usual habits and conduct of Mr. Locke in private life.

Mr. Allen. With a constitution naturally delicate, he had great gentleness of manners. These, in conjunction with his wisdom, obtained for him the respect of his inferiors, the esteem of his equals, and the friendship and confidence of persons in the highest ranks of life. In conversation he was most inclined to useful and serious subjects; but, when occasion offered, he would indulge in a free and facetious style; and was master of many entertaining stories, which he introduced to illustrate his remarks: nor was he averse to innocent and delicate raillery.

Frederic. I have read that he loved to talk with artisans and mechanics in their own style. By putting questions to persons of this description, he would sometimes discover a secret in their art, which was not well understood even by themselves; and he would thus give them views entirely new, which they afterwards put into practice to their own profit. He is described to have had a great dislike to any airs of affected gravity, and to have sometimes diverted himself by imitating such, in order to ridicule them with

better effect. He frequently quoted the maxim that, "gravity is a mysterious carriage of the body, in order to conceal the defects of the mind."

Sir Charles. It was during his residence in the family of Lord Ashley, that he formed the plan of his "Essay on the Human Understanding;" and I have been told, that the work, which was afterwards expanded into two closely printed octavo volumes, he at first imagined he should have been able to compress into little more than a single sheet of paper.

Mr. Allen. His patron was created Earl of Shaftesbury, and made Lord Chancellor; and Mr. Locke was, in consequence, appointed to a lucrative situation. But this he did not long retain. In 1673, he went to the south of France for the re-instatement of his health, which had been considerably injured by his sedentary employments. Lord Shaftesbury, having rendered himself obnoxious to the government, found it necessary to retire into Holland, whither Mr. Locke shortly afterwards followed him. Here he remained until the Revolution, when he returned to England, in the fleet which brought the Princess of Orange; and, in the following year, he published two treatises on Government, for the purpose of defending the principles upon which the Revolution was founded.

Frederic. His residence after this, was in the house of Sir Francis Masham, at Oates, in Essex. Here he found the air peculiarly beneficial to his constitution, and the society so agreeable, that he became one of the family, and continued in it during the remainder of his life.

Sir Charles. He was now appointed one of the Commissioners of Trade and Plantations. The duties of this office he discharged with great diligence and ability for about five years; when he was obliged to resign it on account of ill health. The king requested that he might be continued in the office, although the labour of it should be performed by deputy. But Mr. Locke said, that he could not conscientiously hold any

place to which so great a salary (about a thousand pounds a year) was annexed, without discharging the duties of it himself; and, in consequence, his resignation was accepted.

Mr. Allen. The disease with which Mr. Locke was afflicted, increased to such a degree, that he soon became sensible he could not long survive. He often spoke of his approaching dissolution, and always with composure. After his retirement from public business, he applied himself, almost exclusively, to the study of the Sacred Writings; and in this pursuit, always expressed that he felt the greatest satisfaction. Do you recollect the answer he, on one occasion, wrote to a young gentleman, who had asked what was the shortest and surest way for a person to attain a true knowledge of the Christian religion?

Edmund. He replied, "Let him study the Holy Scripture, especially the New Testament. It has God for its author; salvation for its end; and truth, without any mixture of error, for its matter."

Lady Irwin. How admirable a remark; and how convincing when expressed by such a man! But Mr. Allen seems to express himself as if this profound philosopher had chiefly attended to the study of religion during the latter part of his life.

Mr. Allen. This is certainly not what I mean; for, during fourteen or fifteen years after he left the university, he applied himself, in a very particular manner, to the study of the Scriptures. The comfort which he derived from Divine Revelation, he forcibly expressed in these words: "I gratefully receive, and rejoice in the light of Revelation, which has set me at rest in many things, the manner whereof my poor reason can by no means make out to me." For some months before his death, he passed his time almost wholly in acts of devotion. On the day before he died, he said to Lady Masham, who was sitting by his bed-side, that this world was only a state of preparation for a better; adding, that "he had lived long

enough; and, thanked God that he had enjoyed a happy life; and that after all he looked upon this life to be nothing but vanity." On the same day he particularly advised all those who were about him to read the Scriptures, and desired to be remembered by them in their prayers. An occasion having offered to speak of the goodness of God, he especially exalted the care which God had shown to man in justifying him by faith in Jesus Christ; and, in particular, returned thanks to God for having blessed him with the knowledge of that divine Saviour. All the faculties of his mind were perfect to the last. During the night before he died he had no rest, and, in the morning, requested that he might be carried into his study. There, placed in an arm-chair, he had a refreshing sleep for some time. He then requested Lady Masham to read aloud to him some of the Psalms; to which he appeared extremely attentive. At length, probably feeling the approach of death, he desired her to desist, and in a few minutes expired, on the twenty-eighth of October, 1704, in the seventy-third year of his age.

Sir Charles. The works of Mr. Locke, which are numerous, and on various subjects, were originally published separate, but since his death, have all been collected and printed together in ten volumes.

THIRTEENTH EVENING.

THIS evening Frederic Montagu proposed to discuss the life of a philosopher infinitely superior to Locke. He spoke of him with rapture; and was proceeding to expatiate on the splendour of his genius, and the universality of his talent, when Lady Irwin, good-naturedly interrupting him, remarked, that there could be no difficulty in devising whom he meant; that it could be no other than SIR ISAAC NEWTON, who,

by general acclamation, had been placed at the head of the British philosophers. Frederic bowed assent; and Edmund, showing that he was not unacquainted with the history of this great man, observed that he was born on Christmas-day, 1642, near Colsterworth, in the county of Lincoln.

Lady Irwin inquired who his parents had been, and what particulars were known concerning his childhood and youth; remarking, that all must be interested in the early history of a person who has attained so much celebrity as Sir Isaac Newton.

Frederic. His father was a man of some property; a descendant from an ancient family, which had resided in Lancashire; but he died three months before this great philosopher was born.

Edmund. When a child, Newton was so small that his mother used to say, she could have put him into a quart pot. He was sent to a day-school till he was twelve years old, and then to the grammar-school at Grantham.

Lady Irwin. And what kind of a scholar was he?

Edmund. He is said to have given proofs of surprising genius, though we have no particular account of his literary progress at this period.

Frederic. His great delight was in mechanical contrivances. Instead of playing with the other boys, we are told that he was almost always busied in making different kinds of models in wood. For this purpose he procured saws, hatchets, hammers, and other tools, which he soon taught himself to use with great dexterity. He even proceeded so far as to make a wooden clock.

Mr. Allen. But what occupied a great part of his attention, when a boy, was a new windmill which had been erected near Grantham. His imitative genius was thereby particularly excited; and, by frequently prying into it, during the time of its construction, he contrived to make a model of it so perfect that it

was considered at least equal in workmanship to the original.

Edmund. The account that has been given of this little windmill is very amusing. He sometimes set it upon the top of the house where he lodged, and, having placed a narrow slip of linen upon each of the sails, the wind easily turned them. He put a mouse into his mill, and called it the miller; so contriving the interior that the little animal should turn the sails round whenever he thought proper; and he used to joke about his miller eating the corn that was put into the mill.

Sir Charles. The mechanical contrivances of this wonderful youth were very numerous. Among other things he formed a water-clock, which he made out of an old box. He made a dial-plate at the top, with figures for the hours; and the hand or index of this was turned by a piece of wood which moved according to the dropping of water out of the box. He placed this machine in the room where he lay, and took care every morning to supply it with a proper quantity of water.

Lady Irwin. What an extraordinary youth he must have been!

Edmund. He was so, certainly; but these fancies engrossed so much of his attention, that he was apt to neglect his book, and even dull boys were sometimes put above him in his form.

Mr. Allen. True, Edmund; but whenever this happened Newton was always induced to redouble his pains to overtake them, and so great was his capacity, that he could outstrip them whenever he pleased.

Sir Charles. He used to relate, that he was negligent and very low in the school, till the boy above him one day kicked him violently, and put him to great pain.

Edmund. And what, sir, was the consequence of this kick?

Sir Charles. That he first gave the boy a good

thrashing, then determined to get before him in the school; and that he thenceforward continued rising till he was the head boy.

Edmund. It was a procedure worthy of such a mind as that of Newton.

Frederic. But I have read that no disappointments in the school could induce him to lay aside his mechanical amusements; but that, during the holidays, and in every moment allotted to play, he employed himself in knocking and hammering in his own room; pursuing the strong bent of his inclination, not only in things that were serious, but even in ludicrous contrivances, calculated to please his school-fellows as well as himself.

Edmund. He is related to have been the first who introduced paper kites at Grantham; and of these he was very studious to find the proper proportion and figures, and the proper place for fixing the string. He also made lanterns of crimpled paper, with which he used to go to school in winter mornings. Some of these he tied to the tails of his kites in dark nights, by which the country people were at first greatly alarmed. They mistook his candles for comets.

Mr. Allen. His contrivances were almost innumerable. He was peculiarly attentive in observing the motion of the sun, especially in the yard of the house where he lived; and, into the wall and roof of the house, he drove pegs to mark the hours and half hours that were made by the shade. These, after two or three years observation, he placed so exactly that no one was at a loss to know what o'clock it was by Isaac's dial, as it was generally called.

Sir Charles. His taste for drawing, the practical part of which he acquired without any assistance, was equally remarkable with his mechanical inventions. He filled his whole room with pictures executed by himself; some of them copied from prints, but many taken from life. Among others were portraits of

several English kings, of Dr. Donne, and his schoolmaster.

Edmund. He would often amuse himself, when among girls, by making for them little tables, cupboards, and other play things.

Mr. Allen. We are informed that, at one time, his attention was occupied in making, and that he completed, a cart with four wheels, in which he could sit, and, by turning a windlass, could make it carry him round the house wherever he pleased.

Lady Irwin. It would really have been lamentable, if so extraordinary a youth had not been educated for some learned profession?

Mr. Allen. This, however, was not his mother's intention, for, after he had been at school a few years, she took him home to aid her in managing the business of a farm which she had occupied after his father's death.

Lady Irwin. He must have been but a bad farmer.

Mr. Allen. Indeed he was; for on Saturdays, when he went to the market at Grantham, after he had committed the management of selling and buying to a trusty servant whom his mother sent along with him, he seldom could resist the temptation of retiring into a garret of the house where he lodged, and there entertaining himself with a collection of old books it contained till it was time to go home again.

Sir Charles. He has even been known to stop by the way side, between his home and Grantham, and lie down under a hedge to study, till the man went to the town, transacted his business, and called for him in his way back.

Frederic. I have read that, sometimes, his mother would order him to go into the fields to tend the sheep or corn, and that, although he performed his duty, he did it heavily; his chief delight being to sit under a tree with a book in his hand, or to employ himself with his knife, in cutting wood for different kinds of models.

Sometimes he would get to a stream, and there amuse himself in making mill-wheels.

Mr. Allen. One of his uncles, a clergyman and a man of talent, having one day found him in a hay-loft, engaged in working a mathematical problem, was so much convinced of the impropriety of any longer restraining his natural inclinations, that he prevailed with his mother to send him to the university. In consequence of this recommendation, when he was eighteen years of age, he was admitted a member of Trinity College, Cambridge.

Sir Charles. Newton, you see, even when a boy, afforded an interesting example of industry. His mind was constantly employed, and his occupations, however trifling they may have appeared in themselves, had all a tendency to improve his mind, and unfold that peculiar talent for which he was afterwards so celebrated.

Lady Irwin. I am somewhat curious to know how he conducted himself in college.

Mr. Allen. By now turning his thoughts to mathematical studies, he seems to have complied at once with the college regulations, and his own particular taste. In his outset he is said to have taken up Euclid's Elements, a well known book of ancient geometry, and by once running his eye over it, to have made himself master of every proposition. After he had paid considerable attention to the study of geometry and mathematics, he bought a prism, to try some experiments relative to the doctrine of colours, and was at first highly delighted with the vivid brightness of the colours that were produced by this instrument. The experiments he made by means of it were the foundation of a celebrated work which he afterwards published, entitled, "A New Theory of Light and Colours." I do not describe the nature of his discoveries: this would be foreign to the more immediate subject of our conversations.

Frederic. These particular studies were much inter-

rupted during the time he was in Cambridge. By the breaking out of the plague he was compelled to leave the place; and more than two years elapsed before he made any further important progress in them.

Edmund. But he did not misemploy the time during his absence from the university.

Mr. Allen. It was impossible that such a youth could misemploy his time any where. Whilst he resided in the country, the first idea of his system of gravitation occurred to his mind.

Frederic. I recollect. The falling of an apple from a tree, as he was sitting alone in a garden, first turned his thoughts seriously to this subject.

Lady Irwin. I suppose he began to consider by what principle it was that the apple fell downward rather than upward.

Sir Charles. Just so; and, after unwearied investigation, he was enabled, from so apparently insignificant a beginning, to ascertain the principles of motion, even of the earth, the moon, and the planets, in their respective orbits.

Mr. Allen. At this period Mr. Newton was acting in a private sphere; but the time was approaching when he was to become known as a public character. The first step towards this was his being appointed Professor of Mathematics in the University of Cambridge. Not being in very affluent circumstances, he also obtained an eligible appointment, to the situation of Master of the Mint, with a salary of six hundred pounds a year. He subsequently received the honour of knighthood from Queen Anne.

Frederic. He now lived in a handsome and liberal style, though without ostentation. His hospitality was uniform, and his charity such that scarcely any person, in his circumstances, is supposed to have given away more money in alms, during his life than he. It was with him a maxim, that those who gave away nothing till they died, never gave at all.

Sir Charles. Notwithstanding the contempt he

showed for his own money, no one ever exhibited a more scrupulous frugality of that which belonged to the public. He refused various pensions, and additional emoluments that were, at different times, offered to him; and, in conducting the affairs of the mint, he is reported to have saved the country immense sums of money.

Lady Irwin. Was not Sir Isaac Newton greatly esteemed by the royal family?

Sir Charles. King George the First and his queen showed him many marks of attention and esteem; and often conversed with him for hours together. The queen in particular is said to have been delighted with his company; and has often been known to congratulate herself that she lived at the same time and in the same country with a person of such extraordinary merit.

Mr. Allen. The honours that were paid to him from all parts, and by all persons, were quite extraordinary.

Sir Charles. And yet he had so humble an opinion of himself, and of his own merit, that he had no relish for the applause which he received.

Frederic. I have read that, when he was one day complimented respecting his discoveries in philosophy, he answered, "Alas! I am only like a child picking up pebbles on the shore of the great ocean of truth!"

Edmund. One day, when a friend had expressed himself in strong terms respecting his uncommon talents, Sir Isaac unaffectedly assured him, that, for his own part, he was sensible whatever he had done worth notice was owing rather to patience of thought than to any extraordinary sagacity. "I keep the subject," said he, "constantly before me, and wait till the first dawnings open slowly, by little and little, into a full and clear light."

Mr. Allen. The most amiable modesty was indeed conspicuous in the character of this astonishing man. He never spoke either of himself or of others in such manner as to give even the most malicious censurer

occasion to suspect him of vanity. He was candid and affable in a very great degree, and did not assume any airs of superiority whatever over those with whom he associated. Sir Isaac Newton never thought either his merit or his reputation sufficient to excuse him from any of the common offices of social life.

Sir Charles. Many amusing anecdotes have been related concerning the studies of this great philosopher.

Frederic. It has been said that, whenever he was engaged in mathematical problems or solutions, nothing could induce him to quit the subject: that, in such case, he has sometimes risen from bed in a morning, and begun to dress, but that, with perhaps half his clothes on, he has sat down on the bed and continued for hours undressed. We are also told that his dinner has frequently waited for him two or three hours, before he could unbend his mind and go to it.

Edmund. Dr. Stukeley, one of his intimate friends, happening one day to call upon Sir Isaac, was shown into the dining-room, where a boiled fowl had been placed under a cover. After having waited a considerable while, the doctor, not having dined himself, and finding that Sir Isaac did not make his appearance, sat down at the table and ate the chicken, putting the bones into the dish, and replacing the cover. After a while the philosopher came out of his study, and telling his friend that he was both weary and hungry, took up the cover, but finding that only the bones of the fowl were left, observed, with a smile, that he "thought he had not dined, but he found he was mistaken."

Frederic. So mild and amiable was his temper, that scarcely any accident could disturb it. One day, having been called out of his study into an adjacent room, a favourite little dog, named Diamond, threw down a lighted candle upon his papers, by which the almost finished labours of many years were consumed. When Sir Isaac returned, and saw the injury he had

sustained, he merely rebuked the dog, by exclaiming, "O Diamond! Diamond! thou little knowest the mischief thou hast done!"

Mr. Allen. The life of Sir Isaac Newton is described to have been an almost uninterrupted series of labour, patience, charity, generosity, temperance, and piety.

Lady Irwin. What were his religious opinions? For the opinions of such a man, whose mind could only be influenced by a love of truth, must be well deserving of attention.

Mr. Allen. He was convinced of the truth of Revelation, from a close and attentive examination into the evidences on which it is founded; for, among the great variety of books that he had constantly before him, that which he studied with the greatest application, was the Bible. His firm faith in Divine Revelation discovered itself in the most genuine fruits of substantial virtue and piety. Among other works, he wrote a discourse to prove that the remarkable prophecy of Daniel's weeks was an express prediction of the coming of the Messiah, and that it was fulfilled in Jesus Christ.

Lady Irwin. Was he not a very old man when he died?

Mr. Allen. When first seriously attacked by disease he was in his eightieth year. Until this time he had been blessed with a healthy and vigorous constitution, and had even the bloom and colour of youth. He had never worn spectacles, nor had he lost more than one tooth during his whole life. But, after this, he frequently suffered the most excruciating pains; he, however, bore them with perfect resignation; and, though they would occasionally cause large drops of perspiration to run down his face, he was never heard to utter the least complaint, nor to express the least impatience.

Lady Irwin. How long, sir, did he continue in this state?

Mr. Allen. He suffered, at invervals, for nearly five

years; but his death was, at last, somewhat sudden. On the morning of the eighteenth of March, 1727, he was able to read the newspapers, and he conversed a long time with his physician, in the perfect possession of his faculties. Before night, however, he became insensible, and continued so until his death, which took place two days afterwards. Though he left considerable property, his remains were interred at the public expense, in Westminster Abbey.

Sir Charles. Dr. Johnson was known to have said of Sir Isaac Newton that, had he flourished in ancient Greece, he would have been worshipped as a divinity. Of his astonishing mathematical and philosophical discoveries, which have been called, by way of distinction, the *Newtonian* discoveries, it would be impossible, in the course of our short conversation, to give any satisfactory account. It has been remarked, that if all philosophy and mathematics were to be considered as consisting of ten parts, nine of these would be found of Sir Isaac Newton's discovery and invention. His whole works were collected by Dr. Horsley, and published, in the year 1779, in five volumes in quarto.

DIVINES.

FOURTEENTH EVENING.

As Edmund Irwin surveyed the books in Sir Charles's library, he could not refrain from expressing his admiration of the numerous advantages which had been conferred upon mankind by the art of printing. Mr. Allen asked him if he knew any thing respecting the origin of that art. On stating that he understood it had been invented in Germany, about three hundred and seventy years ago, Mr. Allen corrected his error, and said that printing, from wooden blocks, had been practised in China for many centuries. He observed that, when printing was first introduced into Europe, a similar kind of wooden blocks had been used; that, on these, the letters of a whole page were carved; and that, for some time, it was customary to print only on one side of the paper, and then to paste the blank sides together, which made them appear as one leaf. After a while the printers began to reflect that, by printing on both sides, they should not only save half the paper they then used, but also the labour and inconvenience of pasting, and that, at the same time, they should improve the appearance of their books. In the course of a few years they consequently effected this important reformation.

Lady Irwin expressed herself desirous of being informed in what manner the letters, if cut in wood, were prevented from sometimes breaking off. Mr. Allen replied, that it was the inconvenience arising from this which, at length, caused the introduction of moveable types formed of metal, similar to those now in use.

Her ladyship was aware that William Caxton, a citizen and mercer of London, had first introduced the art of printing into this country from the continent, and had practised it in the reign of Edward the Fourth; but she wished to know what kind of books were first printed here.

Mr. Allen. The first book that Caxton printed in England was called the "Game of Chess;" this was finished in the abbey of Westminster, on the last day of March, 1474. He then printed a work called, the "Book of Jason," and after this another, entitled, "The Dictes and Sayings of the Philosophers." Many of the books that were printed about, and after the time of the Reformation, were on the subject of divinity.

Frederic. Will you tell me, sir, if any of the writings of JOHN WICKLIFFE were among the early printed books? The pleasure I have experienced in contemplating the character and intrepid conduct of this great reformer, makes me desirous of knowing this.

Mr. Allen. His celebrated treatise against the Romish Sacraments, called, "Wycklyffe's Wycket," was printed at Nuremberg, in 1546, and one of his other works was published in London about four years afterwards. You must be aware they could not have been printed during his life time.

Frederic. Certainly not, because he lived before the art of printing had been introduced into Europe. He was born as early as the year 1324.

Sir Charles. What place, Frederic, had the honour of giving birth to this man, whose transcendent abilities, and persevering energy, have procured for our island the enviable distinction of having been the first to break the chains which superstition and an hypocritical policy had imposed upon the powers of the human mind?

Frederic. He was born at a village called Wicliffe, near the town of Richmond, in Yorkshire.

Sir Charles next inquired whether either Frederic

or Edmund had been able to collect any particulars relative to the education and early habits of Wickliffe; but they had learnt nothing further than that his parents had been persons in an humble station of life, that he had early exhibited traits of transcendent talent, and had been educated first in Queen's, and afterwards in Merton College, Oxford. Frederic, however, remarked, that, whilst in the university, he attained great celebrity, for his acquirements in philosophy and divinity: that he excelled all his fellow-students in wit and argument, and also acquired an extensive knowledge of the laws of his country. He further observed, that Wickliffe was not more than thirty-two years of age when he first became the champion of Protestantism. His great celebrity caused him to be appointed Master of Baliol College, Oxford, and afterwards Warden of Canterbury Hall, in the same university. When he began to preach against the abuses then prevalent in the Romish Church, he did it with so much energy, and with such astonishing success, that the progress of his opinions was accounted little less than miraculous. The writers of his own time, though monks, and consequently inimical to his doctrines, assure us that, in the course of ten or eleven years, almost half the people of England had become converts to his preaching.

Edmund. After the death of Islip, Archbishop of Canterbury, who had personally befriended him, and who appears tacitly to have favoured his doctrines, Wickliffe was removed from the wardenship of Canterbury Hall.

Frederic. But he was, in some measure, compensated for this loss, by the patronage of Edward the Third, whose resistance of the exactions of the pope upon the British dominions Wickliffe had defended with great ability. Edward appointed him his chaplain, and, through the interest of John of Ghaunt, Duke of Lancaster, he obtained the living of Lutterworth, in

Leicestershire. Thus supported, he boldly exposed the pride, the avarice, extortion, and tyranny of the Church of Rome.

Mr. Allen. The consequence of which was, that a little before the death of Edward the Third, the pope sent orders that he should be called to account for heretical opinions. He was summoned to appear before the Archbishop of Canterbury and the Bishop of London. He went to the conference, attended by the Duke of Lancaster and other powerful friends; and no censure whatever was passed upon him.

Frederic. After this Wickliffe translated both the Bible and Testament into the English language.

Mr. Allen. In what language had they previously been used; and indeed in what language are they to this day used in Roman Catholic countries?

Frederic. In Latin; which appears to me very absurd, as not one person in a thousand of those who are interested in their contents, is able to understand them in that language.

Mr. Allen. Wickliffe contended for the necessity of using the Scriptures in English; affirming that the will of God was evidently revealed in them; and that, as they contained the rules by which mankind were to live, and to attain the kingdom of heaven, every one ought to be acquainted with them.

Edmund. Are there any copies of Wickliffe's translation yet extant?

Mr. Allen. Yes, several; in the British Museum, and other public and private collections. His translation of the New Testament has lately been printed in a quarto volume. Inform us, Frederic, respecting his death.

Frederic. About two years before he died, Wickliffe suffered much from an attack of the palsy; and, nearly at the same time, the pope cited him to appear at the court of Rome, to answer there for his doctrines, and for the principles which he had instilled into the

minds of the people against the Papists. To this citation he sent an excuse, pleading that "Christ had taught him to obey God rather than man." He was seized with a second fit of the palsy on Innocents' day, 1384, as he was performing divine service in his church of Lutterworth; and he soon afterwards expired, in the sixtieth year of his age.

Sir Charles. What occurrence afterwards took place respecting him?

Frederic. He had lain in the grave betwixt forty and fifty years, when the Papists caused his bones to be dug up and burnt, and the ashes to be thrown into an adjacent brook.

Sir Charles. This was contemptible conduct indeed; because it could neither serve the cause of popery, nor, in any respect, operate as a punishment of Wickliffe. The Papists had not dared to punish him during his life, and now, after his death, they sought to wreak their vengeance on his bones.

FIFTEENTH EVENING.

On the name of Thomas Cranmer, Archbishop of Canterbury, another of the Reformers of the Church of England, being mentioned, Edmund said that, from Strype's Memorials of that prelate, it appears that he had been the son of a gentleman of independent fortune, and born at a place called Aslaxton, in Nottinghamshire, on the second of July, 1489. He further observed, that he had been educated in grammar by a rude and severe parish clerk, from whom he learned little, and endured much; and that, when fourteen years of age, he was admitted a student of Jesus College, Cambridge, where he distinguished himself

by unwearied application to literary pursuits, and soon excelled all his fellow students in learning.

Frederic. He continued to reside in Cambridge for several years; and was appointed reader of the theological lecture in his own college, and one of the examiners of those persons who took the degrees in divinity.

Sir Charles. How came he to be advanced to the archbishopric of Canterbury?

Edmund. In the presence of two of the officers of the court he was heard to reason so learnedly in favour of the divorce of Henry the Eighth from his queen, that he was sent for to court, appointed chaplain to the king, and obtained several successive preferments, until he succeeded to the high dignity respecting which you have inquired.

Frederic. It was at the recommendation, and under the immediate superintendence of Cranmer, that the Bible was first printed and published in the English language.

Edmund. Yes, he was a very active and diligent reformer of the errors and corruptions of the Romish Church. The consequence of which was that he was accused of heresy in the house of commons; but Henry soon put a stop to the prosecution, by a peremptory order that his accuser should go to him, apologize for his conduct, and entreat to be reconciled to him, which he accordingly did.

Mr. Allen. The disposition of Cranmer was mild and forgiving.

Edmund. So much so, that it became a common saying, "If you only do my Lord of Canterbury one shrewd turn, you make him your friend for ever."

Frederic. And yet in a few instances his conduct was far from having been humane. In the reign of Edward the Sixth, who was a Protestant prince, and consequently a favourer of the Reformation, Cranmer was, in some particulars, himself a persecutor. Several

persons, who would not conform to the then established doctrine and discipline of the church, he caused to be treated with great harshness; and, to his eternal disgrace, Cranmer himself passed sentence of death on a poor woman, Joan Boscher, who had deserved pity rather than punishment. Edward objected to sign the warrant for her execution; and at last signed it with tears in his eyes, protesting, that "if he had done wrong, it was in submission to the authority of the archbishop, who must answer for it to God."

Mr. Allen. Such conduct is much indeed to be lamented, particularly in a man like Cranmer, who had witnessed, and had himself condemned the conduct of the Papists in their persecution of the Protestants. The time was, however, fast approaching in which he was to suffer for his own religious opinions.

Frederic. On the accession of Queen Mary, whose principles were known to be directly opposite to those of the Reformation, Cranmer was himself accused, and committed a prisoner to the Tower. He was tried, found guilty, and condemned to be burnt as a heretic and a traitor.

Mr. Allen. After his condemnation, do you recollect the mode in which he was degraded from his high office?

Frederic. I do, sir. To render him as contemptible as possible in the eyes of the people, he was robed in a mock episcopal habit, made of canvas. After this, he had, put upon him, an old thread-bare gown, and a town's-man's coat, and, in that garb, was delivered to the secular powers.

Edmund. And how despicably did his enemies behave towards him! As he was led to prison, a gentleman came to the bailiffs, and gave them some money, to be expended in procuring him a few comforts. For this charitable act he was ordered to be seized; and, had he not found powerful intercessors, would, no doubt, have been tried for so suspicious an act of benevolence.

Sir Charles. It was not long after this that human frailty induced the archbishop to commit what he subsequently felt to be the greatest blemish of his life.

Frederic. Yes; through flatteries, promises, threats, and the fear of death, he was prevailed with, by his enemies, to sign certain documents, acknowledging a belief in the Romish religion. But his recantation availed him nothing; for, though the express condition on which it was made, was that he should be pardoned; this was only a snare laid by his persecutors. The queen herself was the first to declare that "his recanting must not serve his turn. It was indeed good for his soul," she said, "that he had repented, and it might do good to others, but the sentence against him must be executed." After his condemnation he was sent to Oxford, and imprisoned there. The warrant for his execution was then made out, but he was kept in ignorance of it, under an apprehension that he might otherwise retract what he had lately been induced to sign.

Sir Charles. And what occurred respecting his execution?

Frederic. On the day appointed for it, a sermon was preached on the occasion, by one of the Popish doctors; and, after the sermon, Cranmer was desired to make a public declaration of his faith.

Sir Charles. And what was the tenor of this declaration?

Frederic. He first exhorted the people to obedience to the queen; then repeated the Apostles' Creed, and professed his belief of it, and of all things contained in the Old and New Testaments; after which he expressed his unfeigned repentance for having, contrary to his conviction of the truth, subscribed his name to the Popish doctrines. He declared that, "the hand which had so offended, should be burnt before the rest of his body."

Edmund. This must indeed have been a mortifying disappointment to the Papists. They immediately

made loud clamours, and charged him with hypocrisy and falsehood; but he meekly replied, "That he was a plain man, and had never acted the hypocrite, except when he had been seduced by them to recant." I could wish he had on this occasion recollected his own cruel treatment of Joan Boscher.

Mr. Allen. His conduct at the stake was truly exemplary.

Frederic. Yes; he approached the place of execution with a cheerful countenance, still declaring his utter abhorrence of the errors of Popery. After having undressed himself, he took leave of his friends, and was bound to the stake. As soon as the fire was kindled, he stretched out his right arm, and held it steadily, and without shrinking, in the flame, till it was consumed, frequently exclaiming, "this unworthy hand! this unworthy hand!" At last, raising his eyes towards heaven, he expired, with Stephen's dying words upon his lips, "Lord Jesus receive my spirit." This was in the year 1555, and the sixty-seventh of his age.

Edmund. I am desirous of asking Mr. Allen what, upon the whole, is his opinion respecting the character of Archbishop Cranmer?

Mr. Allen. That, in most respects, he was both a good and a great man. His temper was mild and cheerful, and his manners, both in public and private, were pleasing and amiable. He was kind and considerate to his dependants, and, on all occasions, liberal and compassionate towards the poor. He, however, failed in the two important particulars which have been mentioned. In his recantation particularly he sinks in estimation far below his gentle and inflexible fellow-sufferer, Latimer.

Sir Charles. Mr. Allen will probably state to us what writings of the archbishop are still extant.

Mr. Allen. The "Book of Homilies," as it is called, which was printed and ordered to be occasionally read in churches, in place of sermons, was drawn up chiefly

by him. He likewise published a "Catechism, or Short Instructions in the Christian Religion, for the Use of Children and Young Persons;" several letters; and many theological and controversial tracts. His writings were chiefly confined to the great controversy which then subsisted, and contain the whole sum of the theological learning of those times. He was a sensible writer, but his style is to be considered rather as nervous than elegant.

Frederic. Latimer was a fellow-sufferer with the archbishop. If the evening be not too far advanced, I am sure Sir Charles Irwin will not object to his being now introduced. Edmund and I are each acquainted with the most important particulars of his life.

Sir Charles. The two characters are so closely connected, that I think we may with advantage discuss them both in the same evening. They will not, I dare say, be found to occupy too much of our time.

At the request of Mr. Allen, Frederic stated, that this pious divine, HUGH LATIMER, afterwards Bishop of Worcester, was born about the year 1470, at Thurcaston, in the county of Leicester; where his father had rented a small farm, and, by frugality and industry, had brought up a family of six daughters, besides this son, whom he was enabled to educate in the university of Cambridge.

And pray, Frederic, inquired Mr. Allen, what were the religious opinions of Latimer in the early part of his life?

Frederic. Long after he had been admitted into orders, he was a zealous defender of Popery, at that time the established religion of the country. He read the writings of the Romish divines, and the Scriptures, with nearly equal reverence; and held Thomas à Becket and the apostles in equal honour.

Mr. Allen. Then he was an opponent of those principles of Reformation, which were gradually bringing about the establishment of the Protestant faith.

Frederic. He was; and, like St. Paul with the early Christians, he omitted no opportunity of preventing the Reformers from making converts to their opinions; and so much was his zeal in favour of Popery applauded by the university, that he was elected cross-bearer, in all public processions; an employment, the ceremonies or duties of which, he is said to have discharged with peculiar solemnity.

Sir Charles. This appears somewhat strange. How came he afterwards to pursue a course so opposite?

Edmund. By conversing with a clergyman of piety and integrity, one of the Reformers, he at length became convinced that many of the important tenets of the Catholics did not accord with the principles of Christianity. From this period he became a zealous Protestant; and was extremely active in preaching, and otherwise propagating, the doctrines of the reformed religion.

Mr. Allen. And what were the more immediate consequences of such procedure?

Edmund. What any one would imagine. He created numerous and powerful enemies wherever he went. Yet he was much followed by the people, to whose capacities he had a peculiar facility of adapting his discourses. Latimer was acknowledged, even by his opponents, to have been one of the most powerful and eloquent preachers in the kingdom.

Frederic. Wolsey, who was at that time the Lord Chancellor, was requested, by the monks, to prevent his preaching, but, instead of so doing, he gave him a special licence to preach wherever he pleased. On several occasions Latimer preached before the king, who personally favoured him; and, in more than one instance, rescued him from the hands of his enemies. By the recommendation of the prime minister, Cromwell, a

secret friend of the Reformation, he was created Bishop of Worcester.

Sir Charles. How did he conduct himself in this situation?

Frederic. He was active and resolute in performing the duties of his office. It is said that, in his visitations, he was frequent and attentive; in ordaining, strict and wary; in preaching, indefatigable; and in reproving and exhorting, severe and persuasive.

Sir Charles. Do there not appear good reasons for supposing him to have been a strictly conscientious man?

Frederic. There do; many.

Edmund. I will mention one. As he could not, conscientiously, assent to certain articles which had passed both the houses of parliament, he determined to resign his bishopric. On returning from the house of lords, he sent in his resignation, threw off his robes, and then declared, to those around him, that, "he felt lighter than he had ever felt before."

Sir Charles. This story is by no means an improbable one. It is much in character with that vein of pleasantry which accompanied most of the serious actions of his life. But I wish to ask whether Latimer was not afterwards restored to his bishopric?

Edmund. He was not, sir. When Edward the Sixth came to the throne, it was proposed to reinstate him; but Latimer excused himself, alleging his advanced age, and the necessity of privacy and quiet, for the comfort of his declining life.

Sir Charles. From this time then, I may suppose he was not much heard of even as a preacher.

Edmund. The duty of propagating the principles of the Reformation he considered paramount to every other, or even to his love of retirement; and nothing could induce him to cease from exerting himself in that.

Frederic. During the three first years of the reign of Edward the Sixth, he was appointed to preach certain sermons before the king. And such crowds, on

these occasions, flocked to hear him that, we are informed, it was necessary to remove the pulpit out of the royal chapel, into the privy garden.

Mr. Allen. In these sermons, Latimer attacked the vices and corruptions of the great with honest freedom. He charged them, in particular, with covetousness, bribery, and extortion; and this so emphatically, that it was impossible, by any self deceit, to avoid the direct application of his reproofs to themselves. Many of his sermons, which are still extant, have great simplicity and familiarity. They contain a singular vein of humour, and his peculiar style of eloquence was, in that day, exceedingly popular. His action and manner of preaching are said also to have been very affecting; for he spoke immediately from the heart, and exerted a noble and apostolic zeal in the cause of truth.

After a life of indefatigable labour, the time at last approached which was to try the sincerity of his professions.

Edmund. On the accession of Queen Mary, he was cited to appear before a council in London. After he had received this notice, however, opportunity was purposely given him to escape from the kingdom, but he did not choose to do so: on the contrary, he immediately prepared himself to obey the sum mons.

Frederic. We are told that, in his journey, he had to pass through Smithfield, the place where heretics, as they were called, had usually been burnt. "Ah! (said he cheerfully to those who accompanied him) this place has long groaned for me."

Mr. Allen. He was committed to the Tower of London, and even there his hilarity did not forsake him. A servant belonging to the Tower, one cold day, entering his apartment, Latimer bid him "tell his master that, unless he took better care, he should certainly escape him." The message was delivered, and the lieutenant of the Tower, with some discomposure,

hastened to Latimer, to request an explanation of the message. "Why you expect, I suppose, master Lieutenant (replied the divine) that I shall be burnt; now I can tell you, if you do not allow me a little fire this frosty weather, I shall first be starved."

Edmund. Latimer was at this time near eighty years of age. Such treatment, towards so old a man, must therefore have been peculiarly cruel.

Sir Charles. As companions in prison, he was accompanied by Cranmer, Archbishop of Canterbury, and Ridley, Bishop of London, who were imprisoned on similar allegations with Latimer. They were all closely confined in one apartment, and were denied the use of pens, ink, and paper.

Frederic. And in this comfortless situation, it is stated, that their chief resource was prayer, in which they passed a great part of every day. They were all afterwards, I think, removed to Oxford.

Mr. Allen. They were so; and when Latimer was taken before the commissioners that had been appointed for his examination, he was introduced in his prison attire. The venerable old man had a cap on his head, buttoned under his chin, a pair of spectacles hanging at his breast, a New Testament under his arm, and a staff in his hand.

Edmund. I cannot exactly call to mind the mode of his defence.

Mr. Allen. Knowing that, in consequence of his abilities having been impaired by age, it would be impossible for him to recollect all the reasons by which he had been directed in the choice of his religion, he declined entering into any defence whatever of his principles. To this he was the more induced by being aware that, even the most unexceptionable defence, would have been of little avail with judges so prejudiced as he knew his to be.

Edmund. He was pronounced guilty, and condemned to be burnt.

Frederic. On which he calmly exclaimed, "I thank God most heartily that he hath prolonged my life to this end."

Mr. Allen. Will you, Frederic, relate the particulars of his execution?

Frederic. He and Ridley, who was ordered for execution at the same time, were taken from their prison to a place on the north side of Oxford, near Baliol College; Ridley in his episcopal habit, and Latimer in his prison dress. After some previous devotion and ceremonies, they prepared themselves for the stake. Latimer, having thrown off the old gown that was wrapped about him, appeared in a shrowd. They were perfectly resigned, and supported each other's constancy by mutual exhortations. They were then fastened by a chain to a large stake driven into the ground, and a great number of faggots were piled round them. When the faggots were lighted, Latimer said to his fellow sufferer, "Be of good cheer, brother; we shall this day kindle such a torch in England, as I trust in God shall never be extinguished." He commended his soul to his Maker, and the executioners having tied bags of gunpowder round their bodies, he was killed, by the explosion of these, almost immediately afterwards.

Mr. Allen. There are extant, by Bishop Latimer, several sermons, first published in a collection in the year 1549, and afterwards several times reprinted. Some of his letters are printed in Fox's work, entitled "The Acts and Monuments of the British Martyrs."

SIXTEENTH EVENING.

A SHORT discussion this evening took place respecting the persons who, in future, should become the subjects of attention. Frederic mentioned the names of several eminent divines, but observed, that the incidents which

have been recorded of their lives, did not appear to him either so interesting, or, on the whole, so instructive, as those of many whose celebrity had not been so great. He inquired whether it might not therefore be advisable, as a general rule, for the future, to select such lives only, as were in themselves instructive, in preference to those of persons merely celebrated for the eminence of their public character. Sir Charles Irwin, and Mr. Allen, were each of opinion that such would be the best mode, particularly as it would be impossible to discuss, in the whole, a great number of lives. In compliance with this plan, Edmund proposed for the present evening, the life of JOHN JEWEL, Bishop of Salisbury, who lived in the sixteenth century.

Frederic. Bishop Jewel was descended from an ancient family in Devonshire, and born on the twenty-fourth of May, 1552. He was taught the rudiments of grammar chiefly in a school at Barnstaple in Devonshire; and, in his fourteenth year, was admitted a student at Merton College, and afterwards a scholar of Corpus Christi College, Oxford.

Edmund. Few young men could be more exemplary in their conduct, or more indefatigable in their studies, than Mr. Jewel.

Frederic. The dean of his college, who was a rigid Papist, was accustomed to say of him, "In thy faith I hold thee to be an heretic; but surely, in thy life thou art an angel; thou art good and honest, but thou art a Lutheran."

Edmund. With respect to his studies, he is said to have risen generally as early as four in the morning, and to have continued at his books till ten at night, with an earnestness of attention which, in many instances, made it necessary even to remind him of the hours of refreshment.

Sir Charles. This was more than could with reason have been expected.

Mr. Allen. It was so; for although, by such appli-

cation he acquired an astonishing fund of knowledge, it was at the expense of his health; for, in consequence of a neglected cold, he contracted a lameness in one of his legs which became incurable, and continued until his death.

Edmund. It must have been extremely gratifying to him that he should have become eminently qualified for two situations which he obtained, of Tutor, and Professor of Rhetoric, in his college. These he continued to fill, with distinguished honour, for several years.

Sir Charles. Frederic has given us to understand that Jewel, in his religious faith, accorded with the Reformers. How, in such case, came he to have these offices committed to him?

Edmund. It does not appear that he had hitherto professed the tenets of the Reformers, though he seems privately to have favoured them; and his known learning, and unexceptionable moral character, caused him to be esteemed by all. During the reign of Edward the Sixth, however, he became active in the cause of the Reformation.

Sir Charles. What befel him in the reign of Mary?

Edmund. He was expelled from his college, and a plot was laid to deliver him into the hands of the Papists, by whom probably he would have suffered death; but he contrived to escape.

Sir Charles. By what means?

Edmund. The very night in which it was concerted to send him to prison, he privately set out from Oxford; and, pursuing his journey on foot, went by unfrequented roads towards London. He walked on till he was compelled to lie down on the ground, breathless and exhausted. In this situation he was providentially found by a Swiss gentleman, who had formerly been in the service of Bishop Latimer; and who procured for him a horse, and accompanied him to the house of a lady of the neighbourhood. By this lady he was for some time hospitably entertained, and afterwards privately conveyed to London.

Sir Charles. It might be imagined that London was a place peculiarly dangerous for him, since the emissaries of his enemies would there be doubly active in search of him.

Edmund. They were so; and it was only by the most studied precaution that he eluded their activity. He could not long remain in one place; and was, several different times, compelled to change his lodging in the night. But his escape to the continent was at last happily effected by the care of his friend Sir Nicholas Throgmorton, who caused a vessel to be provided for him, and furnished him with money for his support.

Frederic. The death of Mary, and the accession of Queen Elizabeth to the throne, induced all the Protestant exiles, and Mr. Jewel among them, to return to their country; and, in the year 1560, he was created Bishop of Salisbury.

Mr. Allen. Do you recollect, Frederic, how he conducted himself as a prelate?

Frederic. He was unwearied in the performance of his duty; and his exertions were of the most extraordinary kind. He rose about four in the morning. At five he summoned his household to prayers. At six he attended public worship in his cathedral. The remainder of the morning he passed in the most intense study. He dined at twelve, and after dinner devoted his time to the public. About nine in the evening he called his servants to an account how they had spent the day; and then went to prayers with them, and the other branches of his family. After this he again withdrew into his study, where he continued till midnight. He then retired to bed, and generally one of his chaplains read to him until he fell asleep.

Edmund. It was impossible that any man leading so laborious a life, without recreation, and with little rest, could long continue in health. This incessant fatigue gradually undermined his constitution, and was the cause of a decay, which, at length terminated in his

death, in the month of September, 1571, and the fiftieth year of his age.

Sir Charles. Bishop Jewel was celebrated for having possessed a peculiarly retentive memory.

Frederic. Few men could recollect things so well as he; and this excellent memory must have been peculiarly advantageous in his incessant pursuit of knowledge. We are informed that he could readily repeat any thing that he had written, after once reading it. His own sermons are said to have been almost always delivered extempore, from heads which he had previously written down, and on which he was accustomed to meditate while the bell was ringing for church. On a particular occasion he communicated the mode in which he was able to do this, to his college tutor, Dr. Parkhurst; and this gentleman, in the course of twenty-eight days, with only one hour's applicatiou each day, learned the whole of St. Matthew's Gospel by heart, so perfectly, that he could repeat it verbatim from beginning to end; or, he could repeat any particular verse, immediately pointing out what went before, and what followed.

Edmund. Bishop Jewel has been known to say that, if it had been necessary for him to have delivered a premeditated speech before ten thousand auditors, shouting or fighting during the whole time, they would not have confused nor put him out.

Frederic. When he was a young man, Bishop Hooper, to ascertain the strength of his memory, wrote down about forty Welsh and Irish words. Mr. Jewel, after having attentively read them twice or thrice over, said them by heart both backward and forward. At another time he did the same by ten English lines, which were read to him for that purpose, by the Lord Keeper Bacon. He repeated these not only in order, but even confusedly and without order; and this without either error or hesitation.

Sir Charles. All this is certainly very remarkable; but if I may be allowed for a few minutes to interrupt

the account of Bishop Jewel, I think I can mention an instance of memory much more remarkable than his.

Edmund and *Frederic*. Pray let us hear it, sir.

Sir Charles. In the Gentleman's Magazine for the year 1752, it is stated that William Lyon, a player who performed at the theatre in Edinburgh, wagered a bowl of punch that, on the following morning, he would repeat the whole of a newspaper, called the Daily Advertiser, from beginning to end. In the morning, his opponent, reminded of the wager, and imagining him to have been intoxicated the night before, rallied him on his absurd boasting. The man, however, pulled the newspaper out of his pocket, and desired his companion to look at it, and judge whether he should or should not win his wager. Notwithstanding the unconnected matter of the several paragraphs, the variety of advertisements, and the miscellaneous mass of materials contained in it, he is said to have repeated the whole, from beginning to end, without mistake.

Edmund and *Frederic*. This must have been indeed astonishing!

Sir Charles. I will not further interrupt the discussion. Mr. Allen may probably be desirous of speaking of the character and writings of Bishop Jewel.

Mr. Allen. Respecting these I have but few words to say. Both his moral and religious conduct, we are informed, were highly exemplary; the command of his passions was wonderful; and his temper and disposition invariably meek, modest, and obliging. To the poor he was humane and charitable; and he was liberal to all in distress, whether natives or foreigners. He was the author, among various other theological publications, of a celebrated work against the Papists, entitled "An Apology for the English Church," which was published in Latin, and was afterwards translated into English, by the mother of Sir Francis Bacon.

SEVENTEENTH EVENING.

BEFORE the discussion for this evening commenced, Frederic Montagu stated, that, he and Edmund had found considerable difficulty as to the class in which they ought to introduce an eminent British divine, whose philosophical acquirements had been superior to those of most modern philosophers; and yet, whose sermons and other works on divinity had also attained a very high degree of eminence. He alluded to Dr. ISAAC BARROW. Edmund was of opinion that this writer ought to have been introduced among the philosophers, into conversation some evenings ago. Sir Charles Irwin observed that this might have been done, but that, as he had equal celebrity as a divine, he might without impropriety be introduced among the divines; and proposed that he should be spoken of now.

This arrangement having been agreed upon, Frederic said, he supposed it would be requisite to state at the outset who he was: that his father had been a citizen of London, linen draper to King Charles the First, and that he had himself been born in London, in the year 1630.

On Mr. Allen remarking that the early part of his education had not been very promising, Edmund stated that, during two or three years in which he was at the Charter-house school, his conduct and character had been such as to afford but little prospect of success in the profession of a scholar, for which his father had intended him.

Frederic. His disposition was quarrelsome and riotous; and his chief delight seems to have been in inducing the boys to fight with each other. He was extremely negligent of his clothes, and, what was worse, of his books.

Sir Charles. How mortifying must such an outset in

life have been to a parent who was anxiously desirous for the welfare of his child!

Mr. Allen. His father had often been heard rashly to express a wish that, if it should please God to take away any of his children, it might be his son Isaac; so vain is man's judgment, and so short-sighted is he as to what may eventually turn out to his own benefit. On young Barrow being removed from the Charter-house to another school, his disposition took a more happy turn, and he made a rapid progress in learning.

Frederic. He perfectly overcame all his inclination to quarrelling; but he retained great personal bravery through his whole life.

Edmund. I will presently mention a remarkable instance of this.

Sir Charles. At the age of about fifteen he was sent to Trinity College, Cambridge——

Frederic. Where he diligently applied himself to the study of all the branches of useful literature, especially to that of natural philosophy.

Sir Charles. Was it originally intended that he should be a clergyman?

Frederic. No, sir: his father meant him to be a physician; and, with this design, Barrow made considerable progress in the knowledge of anatomy, botany, and chemistry; but, having been afterwards led to change his plans, he applied himself to the study of mathematics and divinity.

Mr. Allen. He was a candidate for the Greek professorship in Cambridge, but was disappointed.

Frederic. And it was this disappointment, as it is thought, which induced him, for some time, to leave the university, and travel upon the continent; but he was so poor that he was obliged to sell his books to enable him to do this. He went to France, and proceeded from thence into Italy; where his money again becoming deficient, he would have been obliged to return home, had not a young merchant of London generously supplied him with the means of proceeding.

From Italy he embarked for Smyrna. He resided more than a year in Turkey, and returned home through Germany and Holland.

Edmund. It was during his voyage to Smyrna that he exhibited that instance of bravery of which I have spoken. The ship he sailed in was attacked by an Algerine pirate; and Mr. Barrow having, at his own request, been placed at one of the guns, worked it to the last, with all the steadiness and courage of a sailor. From the brave defence that was made, the Algerine was compelled to sheer off. Sometime afterwards he was asked by a friend, "Why he had not gone down into a place of security, and left the defence of the ship to those to whom it belonged?" He replied, that "No man was more concerned in its defence than himself: and that it would have been infinitely preferable to him to have lost his life, than to have fallen into the hands of those merciless infidels."

Sir Charles. This certainly was true bravery, though in self defence.

Mr. Allen. Barrow had formerly been disappointed respecting the Greek professorship. There was a vacancy in the same situation the year after his return from the continent, on which he was again a candidate, and was now successful. He was afterwards elected Professor of Geometry in Gresham College, London; Mathematical Professor in the University of Cambridge; and, lastly, appointed Master of Trinity College; having, about two years before, taken the degree of doctor of divinity.

Sir Charles. Can you inform me what was his personal appearance?

Edmund. He was low of stature, thin, and of pale complexion; his hair was light brown, very fine, and curling; yet few men of his size exceeded him in strength. He was peculiarly fond of tobacco, which he used to call his pan pharmacon, or universal medicine. In his dress he was negligent, and slovenly to an excess.

Frederic. This exposed him, in some instances, to great inconvenience. We are told that the minister of St. Lawrence Jewry asked him one Sunday to preach for him. When he entered the pulpit, his pale and meagre aspect, and slovenly and careless dress, had such an effect upon the congregatiou, that the whole church was in an uproar, and nearly all went out. Apparently heedless of the circumstance, he delivered his admirable sermon to the two or three that were left. When, afterwards, Dr. Barrow was asked what he thought of the congregation thus running away from him, " I thought," said he, " that either they did not like me or my sermon, and I had no reason to be angry with them for that."

Mr. Allen. His sermons were truly excellent, in many particulars both of style and sentiment; yet we cannot but admire more the prodigious fertility of his invention, and the strength and force of his conceptions, than the correctness of his execution, or his talent in composition. His style is unequal, incorrect, and redundant, though peculiarly distinguished for force and expression.

Edmund. But, like most of the sermons of that day, excellent as they are, every one must consider them to have been greatly too long.

Frederic. Dr. Pope related that Barrow was once requested by the Bishop of Rochester to preach for him in Westminster Abbey, and was particularly requested not to have a long sermon, as that auditory were accustomed to short ones. Before he went into the pulpit, he showed the bishop his sermon, the text of which was, " He that uttereth a slander is a liar." He had divided it into two parts; one of which was on the subject of slander, and the other on that of lies. The bishop suggested to him the propriety of preaching only the first part, which, with some reluctance, he assented to; and that part alone occupied an hour and a half.

Edmund. But the sermon of greatest length which

Dr. Barrow was known to have preached, was one on the subject of charity, before the Lord Mayor and Aldermen of London. In the delivery of this he was occupied three hours and a half.

Frederic. And when he came down from the pulpit, being asked by a friend whether he was not tired, "Yes, indeed," he replied, "I began to be weary with standing."

Mr. Allen. Dr. Barrow was perhaps the ablest scholar of his own time. Besides a great number of sermons, he published several highly important works on mathematics and natural philosophy. In nearly all the subjects which exercised his pen, he exhibited a clear perception, sound judgment, profound thought, and close and nervous reasoning. A late writer has observed, that the name of Barrow will ever "be illustrious for strength of mind and compass of knowledge. He was unrivalled in mathematical learning, and especially in geometry, in which he has been excelled only by Sir Isaac Newton."

This excellent and learned man died on the fourth of May, 1677, in the forty-seventh year of his age, and was buried in Westminster Abbey, where a monument was erected to his memory, by the contribution of his friends.

When the account of Dr. Barrow was finished, Sir Charles Irwin looked at his watch, and, finding it yet early, proposed a continuance of the discussion, if the young gentlemen were prepared for it. Frederic stated, that he was ready with the life of Dr. GILBERT BURNET, Bishop of Salisbury, in the reign of William the Third. Edmund said that, though he was not quite prepared, he hoped he should not be found very defective. He stated his recollection of having read that Dr. Burnet was the son of a Scotch lawyer, and born at Edinburgh in the year 1643.

Sir Charles. What have you learned respecting his education?

Edmund. That he received the first rudiments of this under his father, by whose care he made so great a progress that, when only ten years of age, he perfectly understood the Latin language: that he was then sent to the College of Aberdeen, where he acquired a knowledge of Greek, and went through the usual course of instruction with great applause; so that he was little more than fourteen years of age when admitted to the degree of master of arts.

Frederic. His father continued to be his chief instructor even during the time he was in college; and, by rousing him to his studies as early as four o'clock every morning, gave him an habit of early rising, in which he continued during nearly the whole remainder of his life.

Mr. Allen. By this early rising he of course had much leisure for lighter studies; and, in his hours of amusement, he perused many volumes of history. Thus, as he had also a strong constitution and an admirable memory, he by degrees acquired a great fund of knowledge.

Frederic. He had been educated for the church; and, when about twenty-three years of age, was presented with the living of Saltoun, in the shire of Haddington, in Scotland.

Mr. Allen. And how did he conduct himself in his clerical character?

Frederic. In a manner most exemplary. During five years that he spent at Saltoun, he regularly preached twice every Sunday, and once on each of the week days. He catechised his parishioners three times a week, so as to examine every individual, old and young, in the principles of religion, thrice a year. He also went round the parish from house to house, giving instruction, reproof, or comfort, as occasion required. He visited the sick twice a day; and administered the sacrament four times a year, personally instructing all those who gave notice of their intention to receive it.

The surplus of his income, after a very frugal expenditure, he bestowed in charity.

Mr. Allen. His liberality was extremely great. Among other instances of this, we are told that one of his parishioners, a tradesman, who had been arrested for debt, applied to him for relief. He inquired how much money would be sufficient to pay the debt, and again set him up in his trade. The man named the sum, and Mr. Burnet desired his servant to pay it him. "Sir," said the latter, "we have but just that sum in the house."—"Well," replied Mr. Burnet, "pay the whole of it to this poor tradesman: you do not know what pleasure there is in making a man happy."

Edmund. About four years after he had obtained the living of Saltoun, he was appointed Professor of Divinity at Glasgow; and was also offered the choice of four Scots bishoprics, but he refused them all. He now went to reside in London, was appointed preacher at the Rolls Chapel, and lecturer of St. Clement's Danes, in the Strand; and became one of the most popular preachers in the metropolis.

Frederic. I have read that his constant practice was to preach extempore; and that he attained a peculiar facility in doing this, chiefly by appropriating many hours of every day to meditate on various subjects; and by accustoming himself at such times, to speak his thoughts aloud, always studying to render his expressions correct. He was once appointed to preach a thanksgiving sermon, before the royal family at St. Paul's; and, as this was the only discourse he had ever written before hand, so it was the only time he ever made a pause in preaching, and this lasted above a minute.

Mr. Allen. It is a remarkable trait in the character of this excellent man, that though, at the time he was resident in London, he had no parochial duty, he did not refuse his attendance to any sick person who desired it. Among others, he was called upon to

attend the Earl of Rochester, one of the most vicious and dissipated men of the day; and for a whole winter, in a conversation of at least one evening every week, Mr. Burnet went over all those topics with him upon which men of light faith, and loose morals, are accustomed to attack the Christian religion. The effect of these conferences, in convincing the earl's judgment, and leading him to a sincere repentance, was made the subject of a well-known and interesting narrative, by Mr. Burnet, entitled, "An Account of the Life and Death of the Earl of Rochester:" this narrative, Dr. Johnson has declared, "the critic ought to read for its elegance, the philosopher for its argument, and the saint for its piety."

Frederic. Mr. Burnet was suspected of not being favourable to James the Second, on account of the religious principles of that monarch having been those of Popery. The consequence was, that the persons in power caused him to be dismissed from his clerical situations, and in some degree compelled him to quit the kingdom.

Edmund. He now travelled through France, Italy, Switzerland, and Germany, and, at length, settled in Holland, where he was admitted into the secret councils of the Prince and Princess of Orange, afterwards our King William and Queen Mary. This prince was too good a politician not to see that the talents, connexions, and reputation of Burnet, all conspired to make him a valuable auxiliary to his cause. The consequence to the latter was, that when William had established himself on the throne of England, he was, almost immediately afterwards, created Bishop of Salisbury.

Frederic. True; but so little anxious was he for preferment that, when this bishopric became vacant, he solicited it in favour of one of his friends, Dr. Lloyd, then Bishop of St. Asaph. The king, however, coldly answered him, that "he had another person in view;" and the next day he nominated to it Mr. Burnet himself.

Sir Charles. His conduct as a private clergyman had been so exemplary, that we are induced to look to him as a bishop who would conscientiously discharge all the duties of that elevated station.

Mr. Allen. This he appears to have done. He regularly held annual visitations at all the principal towns in his diocess. At these visitations, he strictly investigated the conduct of the clergy; and took great pains to induce them to instruct all the young persons under their care in Christian principles. He was also a decided enemy to clergymen holding more than one living, except where the churches lay near each other, and the livings were of little value. And, in respect to clergymen residing upon their livings, he was so strict that he would not permit even his own chaplains to reside with him, after they had once obtained livings. He was also particularly careful in conferring orders, and in giving such preferment as he had to bestow to persons whom he believed to be deserving of it. As the pastor of his whole diocess, he considered it a part of his duty never to be absent from his see, except during his attendance in parliament; from which, as soon as the principal business of the nation was dispatched, he immediately returned to the duties of his episcopal office.

Edmund. His general character, and his admirable and exemplary conduct, raised him high in the esteem both of King William and his queen, though he is said to have occasionally offended the king by the frankness with which he spoke of existing evils in the government.

Frederic. It is a circumstance very remarkable in the conduct of Dr. Burnet, that he never condescended to make the ordinary use of court influence; for, though he obtained many employments and gratuities for others, he is said never to have solicited a favour for himself or his own family; but that, on the contrary, he several times declined offers of high preferment, which were made to him.

Mr. Allen. What account, Frederic, have you to give of the death of this excellent prelate?

Frederic. Not long after he had attained his seventy-second year, he was taken ill with a violent cold, which was soon attended with fatal symptoms. When the bishop perceived his end approaching, he employed nearly his whole remaining time in acts of devotion, and in giving advice to his family; of whom he took leave in such manner as to show the utmost tenderness, accompanied by the greatest resolution and firmness of mind. He was so little alarmed by the terrors of death as to meet its approach with joy, and to express no other concern than for the grief which he saw in those around him. He died on the seventeenth of March, 1715, in the seventy-second year of his age, and was buried in the parish church of St. James, Clerkenwell, London.

Mr. Allen. The domestic habits of Bishop Burnet were very different from those of mankind in general.

Frederic. Indeed, sir, they were. I have already said, that, when a boy, his father accustomed him to rise very early in the morning. This habit continued with him till within a short time of his death. The two first hours in a morning, and the last half hour at night, he occupied in private meditation. He always read the morning and evening prayers to his family, though his chaplains were present. He took the opportunity of the tea-table to instruct his children in religion, and in giving them his own comment upon some portion of Scripture. He seldom spent less than six, and often eight hours a day in study. At his table, which was accessible to all, there was plenty without luxury. He was a most affectionate husband; and expressed his love for his children, not in hoarding up wealth for them, so much as by giving them an excellent education. In his friendships he was warm, open-hearted, and constant; and, though his station and principles raised him many enemies, he always endeavoured, by

the kindest offices, to repay their injuries; and, by returning good for evil, to overcome them.

Sir Charles. The bishop, if I recollect, was remarkable for an absence of mind, which on some occasions were the cause of considerable embarrassment to him. Do any instances of this occur to you?

Edmund. I have read of one. Whilst he was in Paris, several ladies of quality, and, among others, the Countess of Soissons, mother of Prince Eugene, had been imprisoned on a suspicion of having administered poison to some person. Several years afterwards, when the prince visited England, the bishop entreated the Duke of Marlborough to introduce him to his illustrious colleague. The duke consented, but begged he would be upon his guard against saying any thing that might create offence. Mindful of this caution, the bishop resolved to sit silent during the whole entertainment. But the prince, on learning his name, among other questions of civility, asked him when he was last in Paris. Agitated by this unexpected attention, he replied, that "he could not recollect the year, but it was that in which the Countess of Soissons had been imprisoned." His eyes at this instant meeting those of the duke, he recollected his blunder, and, deprived of all his remaining discretion, doubled his error by begging pardon of the prince. He stared wildly around him, and, seeing the whole company in a state of embarrassment, rushed out of the room in the utmost confusion.

Mr. Allen. The person who related this story has also said that the bishop was extravagantly fond both of tobacco and writing.

Frederic. Yes; and that, to enjoy them both at the same time, he bored a hole in the broad brim of his hat; through this he put his pipe, and was thus enabled at once both to puff and write.

Edmund. His appearance in this act must have been very ludicrous.

Mr. Allen. Bishop Burnet was the author of several

literary productions, particularly a "History of the Reformation in England;" an "Exposition of the Thirty-nine Articles of the Church of England;" and "The History of his Own Times," with an account of his Life. Of these the first is a production of labour and authority, to which the state of the times when it was written, added so much incidental value, that a vote of thanks to the author passed both houses of parliament. "The History of his Own Times" is a work, which, with all its defects and redundances, both of style and matter, is valuable as a collection of authentic memoirs of persons, whose names are connected with some of the most important events in English history.

EIGHTEENTH EVENING.

Frederic. I have lately received much instruction from reading Dr. SAMUEL CLARKE'S "Evidences of Natural and Revealed Religion;" a work which is the more remarkable, as it appears to have been published before he was twenty-nine years of age.

Mr. Allen. This, like all the other publications of Dr. Clarke, has certainly great intrinsic excellence, though, in some particulars, his doctrines and opinions have been considered objectionable. The great extent of his learning, his depth of knowledge, and his general talents as a writer, will, notwithstanding, cause his works to be always read and admired by persons who coincide in his opinions.—Who was Dr. Clarke?

Frederic. He was the son of Edward Clarke, Esq. alderman of Norwich, and born in that city on the eleventh of October, 1675. The first part of his education he received in the free-school of Norwich, and, when he was about sixteen years old, his father sent him to Caius College, Cambridge, where his talents soon excited attention.

Edmund. So much so, that he was generally charac-

terized among the students by the title of "the lad of Caius;" and for his great industry he became a model of excellence to the whole university.

Frederic. Shortly after he was admitted into holy orders, he was appointed domestic chaplain to Dr. More, at that time Bishop of Norwich, who afterwards gave him the living of Drayton, near Norwich. Like Dr. Burnet, of whom we spoke last night, he generally preached without notes. It was in consequence of his appointment to preach a lecture founded in Bow Church, London, by the Honourable Robert Boyle, that he was induced to draw up his "Discourses on the Being and Attributes of God," and his "Evidences of Natural and Revealed Religion," which obtained for him great celebrity.

Mr. Allen. Dr. Clarke, like Dr. Burnet, affords an instance of peculiar industry. It was with him a maxim, "not to lose a single moment of time." He is said always to have had a book with him, which he would read in his carriage, while walking in the fields, or at any otherwise unoccupied time. He would occasionally open it even in company, when he could do so without giving offence.

Edmund. And yet, sir, with all this value for time, we are informed, that he would sometimes spend many successive hours in playing at cards. He must certainly have entertained an opinion of this amusement very different from that which we have formerly remarked of Mr. Locke.

Mr. Allen. This certainly appears to have been an extraordinary propensity for a man of his studious habits; and we can only account for it, by imagining that he considered it as a relaxation from study.

Frederic. To proceed with his history. We must remark that he was recommended by his friend, Dr. More, to the favour of Queen Anne, who appointed him one of her chaplains in ordinary, and soon afterwards gave him the rectory of St. James's, Westminster.

Edmund. You have said, Frederic, that he was

accustomed generally to preach extempore, or without notes; but, from the time of his obtaining this rectory, he discontinued that mode, and is said to have preached from sermons which he had previously written.

Mr. Allen. And he became so popular as a preacher, that an ingenious and learned clergyman from the country went one Sunday to hear him, and afterwards declared that he would at any time have gone twenty miles for a similar gratification.

Sir Charles. The death of Dr. Clarke appears to have been very sudden.

Frederic. It was somewhat so, sir. He had gone from his house to preach before the judges at Sergeant's Inn; but, being suddenly seized with a pain in his side, it was necessary to carry him home. He continued in a languishing state till the Saturday morning following, the seventeenth of May, 1729, when, to the surprise and grief of all around him, the pain removed from his side to his head, and he expired in the evening of that day, in the fifty-fifth year of his age.

Sir Charles. We will ask Mr. Allen to favour us with his opinion of the character of Dr. Clarke.

Mr. Allen. I will give you the substance of what Bishop Hoadly has said of him; previously remarking, that some of his religious tenets, particularly those on the doctrine of the Trinity, are by no means accordant with the established principles of the Church of England. The bishop says, that he was a person of natural genius so excellent as to have placed him in the superior rank of men without the acquirements of learning; and of learning enough to have rendered a much less comprehensive genius than his highly esteemed by the world; but in him they were both united. After stating his proficiency in every branch of science and learning, he adds, "if in any one of these many branches he had excelled only as much as he did in all, this alone would have justly entitled him to the name of a 'great man.' But there is something extra-

ordinary, that the same person should excel, not only in those parts of knowledge which require the strongest judgment, but in those which want the help of the strongest memory also; and it is so seldom seen that one, who is an eminent master in theology, is at the same time skilfully fond of all critical and classical learning, or excellent in the physical and mathematical studies, or well framed for metaphysical and abstract reasoning; that it ought to be remarked in how particular a manner, and to how high a degree, divinity and mathematics, experimental philosophy and classical learning, metaphysics and critical skill, all of them various and different as they are among themselves, were united in Dr. Clarke."

Sir Charles. In private and domestic life, he was mild, conciliating, and affectionate; cheerful, and sometimes playful even to simplicity.

Frederic. Dr. Warton has observed, that he valued himself for his agility, and that he would occasionally amuse himself, in a private room of his house, even by leaping over the tables and chairs.

Edmund. This was a strange amusement for a man of his learning and studious habits.

Frederic. It was so; but it probably enabled him to pursue his important and serious studies with greater energy and vigour. To be capable of deriving amusement from trivial circumstances, at least indicates a heart at ease, and may generally be regarded as a concomitant of virtue.

Mr. Allen. The principal works of Dr. Clarke are, a valuable Paraphrase on the Gospels; his Treatises on the Attributes of God, and Evidences of Natural Religion; and his Sermons. And he was involved in an unpleasant theological controversy, by the publication of a work on the "Scripture Doctrine of the Trinity." When little more than twenty-one years of age, he translated from the French language, "Rohault's System of Physics, or Natural Philosophy." He likewise translated Sir Isaac Newton's Treatise on

Optics into Latin, for the use of continental students; and published an edition of Homer, and a beautiful edition of Cæsar's Commentaries, with annotations.

At the close of the discussion relative to Dr. Clarke, Sir Charles Irwin observed, that the peculiar religious tenets of this divine had reminded him of the Dissenters from the Established Church; and he hoped that his young friends did not mean to pass them over without notice. He said that, although he differed from them in several very important particulars, both of belief and of discipline, there had been, and there still were among them many learned and estimable men.

Frederic said that he had intended to speak of two of them, Dr. ISAAC WATTS, and Dr. DODDRIDGE; and that, if the time would allow of it, he would do so now.

The assent of Sir Charles Irwin and Mr. Allen having been given, Frederic observed, that the father of Dr. Watts had been the master of a respectable boarding-school at Southampton, where the doctor himself was born, on the seventeenth of July, 1764. He further stated, that few children began to learn the dead languages at an earlier age than Dr. Watts. We are told that his father first taught him Latin when he was only four years old. He was afterwards instructed in Greek and Hebrew at the free school at Southampton. When sixteen he was sent to an academy superintended by the Rev. Thomas Rowe; and, three years afterwards, he joined the congregation which was under the care of Mr. Rowe.

Sir Charles. What was his progress in study?

Frederic. Very great. His application was so intense that few young men have acquired, in the course of their school education, a more ample stock of knowledge.

Sir Charles. How did he chiefly employ his leisure hours?

Frederic. We are not informed, otherwise than that

he occupied a considerable portion of his time in writing verses, both Latin and English. He has himself said, that he was a maker of verses from the age of fifteen to that of fifty.

Mr. Allen. His biographers state that, when he was twenty years old he left the academy, and spent two years in study and devotion at the house of his father, who treated him with great tenderness. Do you recollect his situation in life after this?

Frederic. He was first appointed by Sir John Hartopp, of Stoke Newington, near London, a private tutor to his son; and, about the conclusion of his twenty-fourth year, was chosen assistant minister of a dissenting congregation in Mark Lane. He afterwards had the appointment of minister; but had scarcely entered on the latter employment, than he was seized with an illness of such long duration, that he was compelled to relinquish it.

Sir Charles. This was a very afflicting circumstance.

Frederic. It was so in itself; but it proved eventually a beneficial one to him.

Sir Charles. In what respect?

Frederic. His character was so amiable, and his conduct so unexceptionable, that he was received into the house of Sir Thomas Abney, of Newington, and continued to reside with that family till his death, a period of thirty-six years. Here, without any care of his own, he had every thing that could sooth his mind, and aid his restoration to health—that could contribute to the enjoyment of his life, and favour the unwearied pursuit of his studies.

Mr. Allen. It was in this retreat that he wrote the whole, or nearly the whole of his works.

Frederic. We are told by Dr. Johnson, that he occasionally preached; and that, although his low stature, which scarcely exceeded five feet in height, graced him with no advantages of appearance, yet the gravity and propriety of his utterance, always rendered his discourses efficacious.

Sir Charles. It is very instructive to read the accounts that have been given to us of the patience of Dr. Watts under great sufferings of body, and of the improvement and comfort which he derived from them. Of these seasons of affliction he says of himself, "I am not afraid to let the world know that, amidst the sinkings of life and nature, Christianity and the Gospel have been my support. Amidst all the violence of my distemper, and the tiresome months of it, I thank God, I never lost sight of reason, or religion, though sometimes I had much difficulty to preserve the machine of animal nature in such order, as regularly to exercise either the man or the Christian." Two or three years before his death, the active powers of his nature gradually failed, yet his trust in God, through Jesus Christ, remained unshaken to the last. He was heard to say, "I bless God, that I can lie down with comfort at night, not being solicitous whether I awake in this world or another." And again, "I should be glad to read more: yet not in order to be further convinced in the Christian religion, or in the truth of its promises; for I believe them enough to venture an eternity upon them." When almost worn out by his infirmities, he said, in conversation with a friend; "I remember an aged minister used to observe, that, the most learned and knowing Christians, when they come to die, have only the same plain promises of the Gospel for their support, as the common and uninformed: and so I find it. It is the plain promises of the Gospel that are my support; and, I bless God, they are plain promises, that do not require much labour and pains to be understood." At times, when he found his spirits tending to impatience, because he could only lead what he called a mere animal life, he would check himself thus: "The business of a Christian is to bear the will of God, as well as to do it. If I were in health, I ought to be doing it, and now it is my duty to bear it. The best thing in obedience is a regard to the will of God; and the way to that is, to have our inclinations

and our aversions as much mortified as we can." In this calm and tranquil state of mind, being now seventy-five years of age, did he wait for the close of his labours and his sufferings; and he quietly expired on the twenty-fifth of November, 1748, in the same house where his life had been prolonged, and made comfortable, by a continuance of the most kind and amiable attention.

Mr. Allen. Dr. Johnson has written respecting Dr. Watts, that few persons have left such purity of character, or such monuments of laborious piety, as he. He has provided instruction for all ages, from those who are lisping their first lessons, to the most enlightened readers; he has left neither corporeal nor spiritual nature unexamined; has taught the art of reasoning, and the science of the stars. His whole works, including poetry, sermons, logic, &c., have recently been collected and published together.

When the life of Dr. Watts was finished, the party still found they had nearly an hour left before the usual time of retiring; and, as they had no particular occupation for it this evening, Mr. Allen proposed that they should proceed with the life of Dr. Doddridge now. He gave, as an additional reason for this, that, in the morning, he must set out on a journey to Bath, to meet his brother; and that, if the discussion were delayed, he should lose the pleasure of joining in it. The young gentlemen lamented the approach of the time when he was to be absent from them; and immediately assented to his request.

The discussion was commenced by Edmund, who observed that, Dr. PHILIP DODDRIDGE had been an eminent dissenting minister, the son of a clergyman of the Church of England, the rector of Shepperton in Middlesex, who had been ejected from his living in the reign of Charles the Second; and that he had been born in London, on the twenty-sixth of June, 1702.

Frederic. It is said that, at his birth, he was so

utterly destitute of every sign of life, that he was laid aside as dead; but that, one of the attendants having observed some appearance of breathing, his existence was happily preserved. From his infancy, however, he possessed an infirm constitution, and a consumptive habit.

Mr. Allen. Do you recollect any particulars relative to his education?

Edmund. Before he could read, his mother instructed him in the history of the Old and New Testament, by the aid of some Dutch tiles with pictures upon them, at the sides of the fire place.

Frederic. When ten years of age he was sent to school at St. Alban's. Not long after this his father died, and, through the misconduct of those who had the management of his affairs, the whole of his property was lost. Through the kindness of Dr. Clerk, a dissenting minister at St. Alban's, he was, however, enabled to proceed with his studies.

Mr. Allen. It probably may have escaped your reading that, during his residence there, Mr. Doddridge began to keep a regular journal of circumstances and events which occurred to him.

Edmund. I recollect to have read of it, sir; and this journal is said to have afforded ample testimony of the diligence with which he improved his time, and of his anxiety to be daily advancing in knowledge, in piety, and usefulness. During the whole course of his education he prosecuted his studies with unremitting diligence; and he became an excellent classical scholar: but his most earnest attention was paid to the subject of theology. His first ministerial office was as preacher to a small dissenting congregation at Kibworth, in Leicestershire; and we are informed that he was remarkably careful in his preparations for the pulpit: drawing up both his sermons and expositions with great method and exactness; and expressing his sentiments in language at once correct and elegant, yet plain and easy to be understood.

Sir Charles. By which he must have rendered himself infinitely more useful to such a congregation than he could have possibly done by highly refined and eloquent compositions. What were the subsequent events of his life?

Edmund. From Kibworth he removed to Market Harborough; and thence, in 1729, to Northampton; where he had the charge of a dissenting congregation, and undertook the conduct of a theological academy.

Mr. Allen. He continued at Northampton more than twenty years, and, during his residence there, produced a great number of religious works, the celebrity of which induced the University of Aberdeen to confer on him the honorary degree of doctor of divinity.

Edmund. It is lamentable to add that, the incessant application which these various labours required, at last so far injured his health, that, in December 1750, he caught a cold, which brought on a fatal consumption. From this time he lingered several months, in a state evidently bordering upon the grave; and it was strongly recommended by his physicians that he should try the effects of a milder climate. He consequently proceeded to Portugal, but died at Lisbon shortly after his arrival, on the twenty-sixth of October, 1751; and his remains were interred in the burying ground of the British factory there.

Mr. Allen. The piety of Dr. Doddridge was exemplary during every part of his life; and, at the approach of death, the composure, vigour, and cheerfulness of his mind were unabated. He uttered many devout sentiments; and the only pain he expressed, was the fear of that grief which his wife and children would experience in his loss.

Frederic. Has the person of Dr. Doddridge been any where described?

Mr. Allen. Yes; he was of slender form, somewhat above the middle size, and stooped considerably. His face was not handsome; but, when he was engaged in

conversation, or in preaching, there was a remarkable sprightliness and vivacity in his countenance and manner.

With respect to his publications; by a strict economy of his time, Dr. Doddridge was enabled, amidst his labours as a tutor and a minister, to produce many estimable works, of which his Sermons, his "Family Expositor," and his account of the "Life of Colonel Gardiner," have attained the greatest celebrity. In early life, particularly, he gave proofs of considerable poetic powers. Of these, the paraphrase on his family motto, "*Dum vivimus vivamus*," which Dr. Johnson has specified as one of the finest epigrams in the English language, may be recited as a specimen:

"Live while you live," the epicure would say,
"And seize the pleasures of the present day"—
"Live while you live," the sacred preacher cries,
"And give to God each moment as it flies."
Lord, in my views let both united be,
I live in pleasure, while I live to thee.

This epigram closed the discussion respecting the life of Dr. Doddridge; and Frederic and Edmund expressed themselves sincerely sorry at the projected departure of Mr. Allen. Sir Charles Irwin remarked, that, as they would be able during Mr. Allen's absence to occupy their time usefully in the study of natural philosophy, which they had lately commenced, he should propose to discontinue the conversations on biography until that gentleman's return. Frederic hoped Mr. Allen would write to them during his absence. He replied, that he probably might send them an account of the lives of a few individuals whose names had either not yet been inserted in the usual works on biography, or the accounts of whom, in such works, were very deficient. The young gentlemen expressed their strong sense of his kindness, and a hope that he would not long deprive them of the pleasure of a letter: shortly after which the party separated to their respective apartments.

NINETEENTH EVENING.

THE absence of Mr. Allen occasioned an intermission of the Biographical Conversations for some days. At length Frederic Montagu received from that gentleman a letter. This he requested permission of Sir Charles to read in the ensuing evening. The family had assembled at the usual hour; he produced his letter, and, with the assent of Sir Charles and Lady Irwin, thus began:

My dear Frederic,

I have now been in Bath nearly four days without having hitherto had leisure to sit down, even for half an hour to write to you. The absence of my brother this morning affords me, however, an opportunity to fulfil part of the engagement that I made with yourself and Edmund Irwin. This letter, which I address to you, as the elder of the two, shall contain some biographical recollections and anecdotes of the Rev. PHILIP SKELTON, an Irish clergyman, whose character is by no means so well known in this country as it deserves; and whose conduct, through every part of his life, is entitled to our unqualified admiration.

He was the son of an Irish farmer, and born in the parish of Derriaghty, near Lisburn, in the county of Antrim, on the tenth of February, 1706—7. His father, a man of good sense, and a strict observer of religion, spared no cost which his means would allow towards the education of his children. Philip was sent to school at Lisburn when about ten years old; but being at first negligent, he was soon cured of his negligence by being taken home, sent into the fields, and treated as a menial servant; after which he applied with great diligence to his book, and soon displayed an ardent desire for learning. On the death of his father, which happened whilst he was at school, his mother, who was left with ten children, had many difficulties to struggle with in bringing up and educating this

numerous family. Philip therefore began to think it his duty, by intense application, as early as possible to relieve her, from at least the expense of one. Often has he been known, when at a loss for candles, to make use of furze, which he gathered for the purpose from a neighbouring heath. This he threw piece by piece upon the fire, and, as well as he was able, studied by that glimmering light. He, and some of his most industrious school-fellows, are also said to have occasionally assembled in the fields, for the purpose of examining each other in their tasks and lessons. In these examinations, he who was unable to answer the question proposed, forfeited a halfpenny to the boy who examined him. This, Mr. Skelton used to say, made them prepare themselves with great assiduity; for halfpence were, at that time, very scarce with them.

On leaving school, Mr. Skelton was entered as a sizer in the university of Dublin. Here he applied himself, with great diligence, to useful studies, and soon acquired the reputation of a good scholar.

When of sufficient age, he was admitted into holy orders. Previously to his ordination he fasted and prayed two days; and his examination by the Bishop of Clogher, and his chaplain, was so strict, that it continued for a whole week, and was entirely in the Latin language, without his being permitted to speak a word of English.

He was appointed to the curacy of Monaghan, in the diocess of Clogher; and entered upon his office with such zeal for the salvation of those under his care, as a warm sense of duty only could inspire. He visited his people from house to house, without distinction of sect; and freely conversed with them, mingling, on all occasions, entertainment with instruction. It was his practice also to catechise the children every Sunday evening in the church. On a particular evening in the week, which he appointed, he invited to his lodgings, persons of every age, that he might instruct them in religion. In the pulpit he displayed a

strong, manly, and native eloquence, which arrested the attention of all his hearers. He explained to them in plain but powerful language, the threats and the promises of the Gospel. He declared to them the indispensable conditions of salvation; and his ardour and sincerity made an irresistible impression on their hearts. It was said that even the children of Monaghan, whom he instructed, knew more of religion at that time than the grown people of the neighbouring parishes. The manners of his flock were soon improved, and vice and ignorance retreated before the attacks of so powerful an assailant.

The charities of Mr. Skelton were very extraordinary. The income he derived from his curacy was only forty pounds per annum; and of this he gave ten pounds to his mother; for some time, ten pounds to the tutor of his college, to discharge a few debts he had contracted there; the rest he applied towards his own maintenance, and in charity. He frequently visited the gaols, and his visits were attended with the happiest effects to the prisoners. On one occasion, when a convict in the gaol of Monaghan, of whose innocence he was well assured, was condemned to be hanged within five days, he set off for Dublin; and, on his arrival, was admitted to the privy council. Here he pleaded for the prisoner with such eloquence, as to obtain his pardon, and returned with it to Monaghan, in time to save the man's life. That he might be of greater use to the poor, he studied physic, and was peculiarly successful in his gratuitous practice.

There was in his parish a man of notoriously wicked life. Mr. Skelton went to him, and, warning him of his evil ways, the man in a fury snatched a spit, and attempted to murder him. He was at first compelled to retreat, but had the courage to return; and, after much danger and difficulty, by long perseverance, brought the man to a sense of religion.

He was still the curate of Monaghan when he pre-

pared for the press a valuable work in dialogue, entitled "Deism Revealed." This he published in London, in two volumes octavo, and the greater part of the sum that he obtained for it, (two hundred pounds) he laid out in the purchase of books.

A few months after the publication of this work, the Bishop of Clogher, in whose diocess Mr. Skelton's curacy was situated, was asked by Dr. Sherlock, Bishop of London, if he knew the author. "O yes," he replied, he has been a curate in my diocess near twenty years." —"More shame for your lordship," retorted Sherlock, "to let a man of his merit continue in your diocess so long a curate."

The bishop was at length, in some degree, compelled to give him preferment; and he bestowed upon him the living of Pettigo, in a wild part of the county of Donegal, and worth about two hundred pounds a year. The parish was near fifteen miles long, and ten miles in breadth; and the inhabitants were uncultivated, disorderly, quarrelsome, fond of drinking, and sunk in profound ignorance. Skelton used to say, that he considered himself as a missionary sent to convert them to Christianity. Thus situated, he was wholly deprived of civilized society; and has often been known to declare, that he was obliged to ride seven or eight miles before he could meet with a person of common sense to converse with. He had here, however, a wide field for improvement, and he immediately began his work. He visited his parishioners from house to house; instructed them late and early; told them of Jesus Christ, who died for their sins, and whose name some of them had scarcely heard of before. In his journies through the parish he took down the names of the children, directing their parents to send them to church to be instructed in the catechism. During the summer, he also explained the catechism on Sundays to his whole congregation. He was thus, like Job, "eyes to the blind and feet to the lame." By his

extraordinary diligence and care, he at length brought these uncultivated people to believe in a God who made them, and a Saviour who redeemed them.

A farmer with whom he lodged had a son that was blind. Mr. Skelton, perceiving this young man to possess an extraordinary understanding, and to be peculiarly well acquainted with the Scriptures, employed him to go through the parish, during the winter, to instruct his people in religion; and in the summer he examined them himself, to know what benefit they had derived from the instructions of his assistant.

This indefatigable and exemplary divine showed, in a peculiar manner, the earnestness of his zeal for his fellow-creatures, by his exertions in their relief during the pressure of a remarkable dearth, which prevailed in the year 1757, and which was most severely felt in the rough and barren lands of his own parish. He travelled from cottage to cottage, over mountains, rocks, and heath, to discover the real state of the poor; and was thus witness to many scenes of the most afflictive distress. He purchased oatmeal, and distributed it among his parishioners to appease the hunger of those who most needed it. At length his money was nearly all spent. He now began to be apprehensive lest, after having kept his people alive so long, he should at last see them die of hunger. The sacrifice he made on this occasion was such as can be duly appreciated only by a few. He resolved to sell his books, the companions of his solitude, and the sources of delight in the midst of an ignorant and uncultivated society. They were conveyed to a bookseller in Dublin, who, after having advertized them for sale without success, purchased them himself for eighty pounds. Soon after the advertisement had appeared in the newspapers, two ladies, conjecturing the cause of their being offered for sale, sent Mr. Skelton fifty pounds, requesting him to keep his books, and relieve his poor with that money. With many expressions of gratitude for their donation, he told them that he had dedicated the

books to God, and must sell them. Accordingly both sums were applied to the relief of his parishioners. This was an act of such genuine benevolence, that any reflections I might be inclined to make on it, would only lessen the impression which it must, my dear Frederic, make upon your mind. One circumstance must be added, that the bookseller had only sold part of the books, and that those which remained, Mr. Skelton, when he was able, repurchased, at the price that had been paid to him for them, he insisting on payment of interest for the sum they amounted to.

After Mr. Skelton had been about nine years at Pettigo, he obtained the living of Devenish, in the county of Fermanagh, near Enniskillen. This living, the value of which was about three hundred pounds per annum, was likewise given to him by the Bishop of Clogher. In his new charge he exerted the same zeal to instruct his flock both in public and private, and the same benevolence towards the poor, which had rendered him so great a benefit to his former people. His charities, while he continued at Devenish, were if possible more extensive, in proportion to the value of the living, than they had been in Pettigo.

The bishop of Clogher next promoted him to the living of Fintona, a market town in the county of Tyrone. This living was worth at least a hundred pounds a year more than that of Devenish. He was now in the fifty-ninth year of his age, and used to say, "God Almighty has been very kind to me: when I began to advance in years, and stood in need of a horse and servant, he gave me two livings, one after another, each worth a hundred a year more than the preceding. I have, therefore, been rewarded by him, even in this world, far above my deserts."

At Fintona he proved the same diligent, kind, and faithful pastor as at each of his former parishes; but here two circumstances occurred which were very characteristic of him. Having discovered that most of his Protestant parishioners were Dissenters from the

Established Church, he invited their minister to dine with him, and requested permission to preach at his meeting on the following Sunday. The consent was given: Mr. Skelton preached in the meeting-house; and the people were so much pleased with him, that the greater number of them quitted their own teacher, and went to church. A little while after this Mr. Skelton asked the preacher how much he had lost by the desertion of his hearers. He said about forty pounds a year; on which Mr. Skelton settled that sum annually on him, and paid it out of his own pocket.

I have already informed you that this exemplary divine had studied medicine, for the purpose of assisting the poor, by giving them advice and medicines gratis. His doing thus at Fintona caused Dr. Gormly, the physician of the place, to complain that he had thereby lost a considerable part of his business; on which Mr. Skelton also settled forty pounds a year upon him. Thus, my dear Frederic, you observe, that he not only took upon himself the toil of doing good, but voluntarily paid for doing it.

As his parishioners at Fintona were but little acquainted with religion, he found it necessary first to visit every house within the parish, and then to collect, to a particular spot, the people of each district of it, that he might instruct them the more conveniently. When he had visited the several families, throughout the parish, he afterwards called to his aid the blind man who had formerly assisted him at Pettigo. This man passed one winter at Fintona, teaching the people the first principles of religion. During the summer Mr. Skelton catechised the children in the church, as usual, bestowing on them Bibles and other religious books, according to the mode in which they answered, and partly according to the distance whence they came; and he accompanied his examination by short extempore lectures on the catechism.

After he had resided some years at Fintona, he found it necessary, on account of his health, to pass

the chief part of every winter in Dublin. Here he was so much admired in the pulpit, that the church in which he preached was always crowded with hearers. His biographer, the Rev. Samuel Burdy, has, in particular, described his preaching a sermon at Dublin, on a day appointed for a general fast, in the year 1776. He was at that time about seventy years of age: his wig was brown, his gown old and rusty, his face furrowed with wrinkles, and his person tall, though somewhat bent by years. In short, he bore the resemblance of one in mourning, commissioned to remind the world of the judgments of God brought on them for their sins. Old as he was he displayed the greatest energy. He spoke with abhorrence of the infidelity and the corruptions of the age; and in every particular exhibited the highest powers of eloquence.

At length, after fifty years of indefatigable labour in the ministry, his increasing infirmities rendered him incapable of any longer discharging his public duties; and in 1780 he took his final leave of Fintona, and removed to Dublin to end his days. On Good Friday, 1787, he was attacked by a severe fit of illness, and he closed his valuable life on the fourth of May following, in the eightieth year of his age. His remains were interred near the west door of St. Peter's church-yard, Dublin, according to his own particular request.

Such, my dear Frederic, was the life of assuredly one of the most able and exemplary divines that ever existed. The property which he left at his death, did not amount to seven hundred pounds; so liberally had he applied the profits arising from his livings to the benefit of those committed to his care. He was the author of several useful publications, particularly "Deism Revealed," which I have already mentioned, several volumes of sermons, and some detached tracts.

It will be needless for me, after so detailed an account of the life of Mr. Skelton, to speak of his character. His actions and conduct will speak for

themselves, and will afford ample subject for contemplation; and I have no doubt but your own good sense will enable you to derive from them that instruction, which they are well calculated to afford.

I am, my dear Frederic, yours most affectionately,

EDWARD ALLEN.

Edmund. How admirable a character has Mr. Allen here delineated. I never heard of Mr. Skelton before; but this narrative affords sufficient proof that the life of a person little known to the world, may be found more instructive than the lives of many who have attained great celebrity.

Frederic. I will immediately write to Mr. Allen, to thank him for his excellent account. He will next write to you, Edmund.

Edmund. Yes; and I am very anxious to see his letter. I wonder who will be the subject of it.

Sir Charles. I will tell you. Before Mr. Allen went, he informed me that he should write to you an account of Dr. Paley; and, if nothing occurs to prevent it, I have no doubt you will receive the letter in two or three days.

TWENTIETH EVENING.

The letter that Sir Charles had mentioned arrived earlier than had been expected. Edmund received it the following day; and he read it to the party on the same evening. It was as follows:—

My dear Edmund,

I yesterday wrote to our friend Frederic an account of Mr. Skelton, a most exemplary Irish clergyman. This evening, having leisure to write to you, I will give you as good an account as my recollection will enable me of the life of the late WILLIAM

Paley, D.D. With many of his works, particularly his "Evidences of Christianity," you are well acquainted.

He was the son of the Rev. William Paley, one of the minor canons of the cathedral of Peterborough, and afterwards head-master of a school at Giggleswick, in Yorkshire. He was born at Peterborough, in the year 1743. The whole of his early education he derived from his father; and by the exercise of great abilities, united to a more studious disposition than usually belongs to boys of his age, he soon surpassed all his companions in learning. But it was not upon classical literature alone that his mind was bent. He was ardent in the pursuit of every kind of knowledge; was curious in making inquiries about mechanism, whenever he had opportunity of conversing with workmen, or with other persons capable of affording him information.

In his sixteenth year he was admitted a sizer in Christ's College, Cambridge; commencing his residence in the university at a period, as he frequently afterwards mentioned, too early to encounter the dangers of a college life. He gave the following account of himself in Cambridge. "I spent," he said, "the first two years of my undergraduateship happily, but unprofitably. I was constantly in the society of young men, who were not immoral, but idle and rather expensive. At the commencement of my third year, however, after having one evening left the usual party at rather a late hour, I was awakened at five in the morning by one of my companions, who stood by my bed-side, and said, 'Paley, I have been thinking what a fool you are. I could, probably, do nothing were I to try, and I can afford the life I lead. You could do every thing, and cannot afford it. I have had no sleep during the whole night, on account of these reflections, and am now come solemnly to inform you, that, if you persist in your indolence, I must renounce your society.'" Dr. Paley says, that he was so much affected by the pecu-

liarity of this visit, and the conduct of the visitor, that he continued in bed during great part of the ensuing day, and formed his plan. He ordered a fire to be prepared every evening, that, in the morning, it might be lighted by himself. He now arose regularly at five o'clock, and studied during the whole of the day, except at such hours as were required for the chapel and hall, allotting to each portion of time its peculiar branch of study; and, just before the closing of the college gates, at nine o'clock, he went to a neighbouring coffee-house, where he constantly regaled himself upon a mutton chop, and a glass of milk-punch. By this attentive arrangement of his studies, he was enabled, when he took his degree, to attain the highest honour that the university can bestow, and was what is denominated senior wrangler.

Thus, my dear Edmund, was Mr. Paley happily roused to a full exertion of his faculties, before his habits were completely formed; and to this very extraordinary adventure may perhaps be attributed not only the success of his immediately succeeding labours, but the subsequent invaluable productions of his pen.

It is difficult to say in what literary acquirements, after he became a graduate, he most excelled. His knowledge was general. Nothing escaped his notice: he was conversant in every branch of science, and in every kind of information.

Mr. Paley was elected a fellow of Christ's College; and, residing in the university, he, for several years, discharged the duties of college tutor, with great zeal and assiduity. His whole system of tuition was eminently calculated to render instruction easy, pleasant, and of permanent effect. While thus employed in improving others, he was laying the foundation of his own future fame; for his lectures on moral philosophy, and on the Greek Testament, contained the outlines of those popular and highly estimable works, which he afterwards published, the "Principles of Moral Philosophy," and "View of the Evidences of Christianity."

This situation he continued to fill about ten years, when he quitted the university and married.

The first preferment he obtained was the rectory of Musgrove, in Westmoreland, worth only about eighty pounds per annum; and, in the following year, he was inducted into the vicarage of Dalston, in Cumberland. Here, in addition to the customary service of his church, Mr. Paley gave a course of lectures on the New Testament, on the Sunday afternoons; and there is no part of his character more justly entitled to respect than the active and zealous discharge of his professional duties. He was afterwards successively made a prebend of Carlisle, archdeacon of the diocess, and chancellor; a prebend of St. Paul's, and subdean of Lincoln. In January, 1795, he proceeded to Cambridge to take his degree of doctor of divinity; and, before he left that place, was surprised by a letter from the present Bishop of Durham, offering him the rectory of Bishop-wearmouth, estimated at about twelve hundred pounds a year. When he waited on his lordship to express his gratitude, his acknowledgments were interrupted:—"Not a word," said the bishop; "you cannot have greater pleasure in accepting the living, than I have in offering it to you." Henceforward Dr. Paley divided his residence principally betwixt Lincoln and Bishop-wearmouth, passing his summer at the latter, and his winter at the former of these places.

About the year 1804 his health began to decline; and, in the following year, he gradually sunk under the accumulated influence of debility and disease. His mental faculties, however, remained unimpaired to the last; and perhaps no man ever preserved greater self-possession, and greater composure, than he did during the whole concluding scene of his life. His mind was clouded by no displeasing recollections, no vain anxieties, no fond regrets. He had enjoyed the blessings of the world with satisfaction; and he relied, for future happiness, on the promises of that Divine Revelation, the truth of which he had so strenuously

laboured to evince. He consequently met the approach of death with firmness, and comforted his afflicted family with the consolations of religion; and late on the evening of Saturday, the twenty-fifth of May, 1805, he tranquilly resigned his soul into the hands of his Maker.

With respect to the private life of Dr. Paley, it has been remarked, that perhaps no studious man ever entered more into the pleasures of society, or presented a more rare assemblage of amiable and attractive qualities in social life, than he. His *naiveté*, his good humour, his fund of knowledge, and his great powers of conversation, rendered him the delight of all who associated with him. He was at all times easy of access, and ready to enjoy the company of the rational and intelligent, as a relief from his professional engagements, and his private studies. He had also the happy art of deriving knowledge from others, by addressing every man on those subjects with which, from his profession, or his situation in life, he was likely to be best acquainted. He was one of those men, who, to use his own phrase, "are never idle," and from even the most trifling company he could occasionally draw information.

It now only remains, my dear Edmund, that I should inform you respecting the different publications of Dr. Paley. Of these the most celebrated are his "Principles of Moral and Political Philosophy," and his "View of the Evidences of Christianity." He also published a work entitled, "Horæ Paulinæ; or, the Truth of the Scripture History of St. Paul evinced, by a Comparison of the Epistles which bear his Name with the Acts of the Apostles, and with one another;"—"Natural Theology; or, Evidences of the Existence and Attributes of the Deity, collected from the Appearances of Nature;" and a volume of "Sermons," which was published after his death. It would occupy too great a portion of this letter, were I to enter into any dissertation respecting the contents

and character of works which have obtained so much celebrity as these. I shall only say, in the language of his biographer, what must be universally acknowledged, "that no author ever wrote more pleasingly on the subjects of which he has treated than Dr. Paley: that the force and terseness of his expressions, are not less admirable than the strength of his conceptions; and that there is, both in his language and his notions, a peculiarity of manner, stamped by the vigour of his mind, which will perpetuate the reputation of his works."

I am, my dear Edmund,
Your sincere friend,
EDWARD ALLEN.

GENERAL WRITERS.

TWENTY-FIRST EVENING.

THE conversations had been interrupted nearly a fortnight, by the absence of Mr. Allen; and his return was hailed with delight by all, but by none more sincerely than his pupil, Frederic Montagu.

On the first meeting afterwards, the conversation accidentally commenced by a remark of Lady Irwin, concerning the Augustan age of literature. She asked, whether the commencement of the eighteenth century had not usually been esteemed the Augustan age of English literature; as that period had been distinguished by numerous writings, eminent for their wit, their elegance, and taste. Mr. Allen thought such a notion injurious to the cause of literature, as it had a tendency to check the hope of future improvement. To this, Sir Charles remarked, that, if we were fairly to estimate the writings to which Lady Irwin alluded, we must at least allow that many of them had extraordinary merit; and that the names of the literary men, who then flourished, would continue to be known so long as any love of elegant knowledge existed in the world. He mentioned those of Addison, Steele, Swift, Locke, Newton, Clarke, Atterbury, Pope, and some others; and asked, if the writers of any age, either before or since, had produced works of greater intrinsic merit than those which they had published? Mr. Allen acknowledged their eminence, but was still not inclined to bestow the palm of merit solely upon them. As for Newton, he observed, that an exception must be made for him, as he would have conferred celebrity on any period. He was willing to allow that the age of which Lady Irwin had spoken might, in

some degree, be considered the commencement of a literary age, in which Lyttleton, Goldsmith, Hume, Johnson, Robertson, Blair, and numerous others, successively followed.

The contest might have continued longer had it not been terminated by Lady Irwin, who, fearing she had already too long occupied the attention of the party, by this irregular discussion, proposed that Edmund should commence with the life of Addison, on which, she was aware, he had been preparing himself.

Edmund began: he said, that JOSEPH ADDISON was the son of the Rev. Launcelot Addison, Dean of Litchfield; and that he had been born in 1672, at the village of Milston, near Ambresbury, in Wiltshire: that the early part of his education he received under his father, from whom also he imbibed those principles of piety, which characterised him through life; and that after his father had been created Dean of Litchfield, he removed to that city, and young Addison was, for some time, placed at school in Litchfield. Nothing, however (continued Edmund), has been stated by his biographers respecting his early habits or acquirements.

Frederic. O yes; Dr. Johnson has related that one of his masters was *barred out* of the school at the approach of the holidays, and principally by the mischievous contrivance of Addison.

Mr. Allen. Surely, Frederic, that is no very important fact. Any other sprightly youth might have been led into the same mischief.

Edmund. From Litchfield he was sent to the Charter-house; where he first contracted that intimacy with Sir Richard Steele, which, by their joint labours in the Tatler, Spectator, and Guardian, has been so effectually commemorated.

Frederic. As early as the age of fifteen he was admitted a member of Queen's College, Oxford.

Edmund. And he there applied with such diligence to classical learning, that he speedily acquired an ele-

gant style of Latin composition. Some verses that he wrote on the inauguration of William and Mary, obtained for him so much celebrity, that he was elected into Magdalen College, on the founder's benefaction.

Lady Irwin. What particular profession was it intended Mr. Addison should follow?

Edmund. His father certainly meant him for the church; but his own natural diffidence, which he could never entirely overcome, and some scruples that he entertained concerning the clerical office, induced him to decline it.

Lady Irwin. What then were his views relative to the future?

Edmund. I do not know; but it appears that, on leaving college, having had an inclination to travel, he obtained from the crown, for that purpose, through the patronage of Lord Somers, an annual pension of three hundred pounds. In 1699, he made a tour through Italy, surveying all the interesting parts of that country, with the rapture of a poet, and the judgment of a critic; comparing, as he proceeded, the appearance of the mountains, woods, and rivers, with the descriptions which had been given of them by the Roman poets and historians.

Lady Irwin. It was a fortunate circumstance that he was thus supplied with the means of paying his expenses.

Edmund. So it was for a while; but Mr. Addison experienced the same fate as many others who have been dependant upon courts. His pension was not regularly paid.

Frederic. And he was obliged to return to England; having, in the mean time, been compelled by indigence, to become the travelling tutor of a young person of fortune. He subsequently published an account of his travels. The chief objects of this work are said to have been to recommend the study of the classics, and to promote the cause of liberty.

After the victory of Blenheim, Mr. Addison was

requested to write a poem commemorative of that glorious event; and this poem, which was addressed to the Duke of Marlborough, and was entitled, "The Campaign," was the means of his obtaining an office under the government. In the following year he was promoted to be one of the Under Secretaries of State; and he subsequently obtained the situations of Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, and Keeper of the Records of that kingdom.

Some circumstances, relative to his fees of office, have been mentioned, but I do not recollect what they were.

Edmund. I will tell you: Addison never, in civility, would remit the payment of fees that were due to him from his friends. He used to say, "I may have a hundred friends, and if my fee be two guineas, I shall lose two hundred guineas by relinquishing my right, and no friend will gain more than two guineas. There is, therefore, no proportion betwixt the good imparted, and the evil suffered."

Frederic. This was not a very friendly mode of reasoning.

Edmund. He, however, acted upon it; and, in his official capacity, never indulged his friends by any gratuitous services.

Sir Charles. And yet Mr. Addison was not a man of sordid character. Besides, it should not be forgotten, that he made it an invariable rule never to take, on any pretence, more than the established fees. It is related, among other instances, that when he was secretary in Ireland, he had materially promoted the interest of a Major Dunbar, who offered him, in return, a bank note for three hundred pounds, and a diamond ring of great value. These he refused to accept, and wrote thus to the major:—"Believe me, sir, when I assure you, I never did, nor ever will, on any pretence whatsoever, take more than the stated and customary fees of my office. I might keep the contrary practice concealed from the world, were I capable of it; but I could not from myself; and I hope

I shall always fear the reproaches of my own heart more than those of all mankind."

Lady Irwin. This was an instance of liberality worthy of the mind of Addison.

Sir Charles. It was about the period of which we are speaking, that the well-known periodical publication, called, "The Tatler," made its appearance. This work was conducted by Sir Richard Steele; and, on its termination, Sir Richard, in conjunction with Mr. Addison, projected "The Spectator," the first number of which appeared in the beginning of March, 1711.

Edmund. For this publication, I believe, Mr. Addison furnished about two hundred and seventy of the best papers.

Lady Irwin. Is not each of these papers distinguished by some one of the letters in the name of the muse CLIO?

Mr. Allen. It is, madam; but I am inclined to suppose that this is an accidental coincidence, and that Mr. Addison did not intend such a compliment to his papers, as to subscribe them with the name of one of the muses. There is reason to suppose that his signatures merely referred to the places where he happened to have written the respective papers; that C was placed for Chelsea, L for London, I for Islington, and O for his Office.

Lady Irwin. Your conjecture is a very ingenious one, but, I think, it does not entirely coincide with the accounts that have been given by Addison's early biographers.

Edmund. To the "Guardian," a work which followed the Spectator, Mr. Addison also contributed a great number of papers that have been much admired.

Frederic. But, previously to the publication of the earliest of these works, he had written an opera called "Rosamond."

Edmund. Which was acted, and wholly failed. Yet, a little while afterwards, he ventured to offer for the stage his tragedy of "Cato."

Lady Irwin. Poor man! Diffident as he was, I do not envy his feelings on the first night of its performance.

Edmund. His agitation was such, that if it had been condemned, his intimate friends believed, his health would have been very seriously affected.

Frederic. Every means, however, were adopted to render the hazard of this as little as possible. Steele relates, that he undertook to place numerous friends in different parts of the house, to applaud it. The danger was soon over; and the success of this tragedy was obtained in a way that had been little thought of. The whole nation was at that time infuriated by faction. The consequence was, that the Whigs, as a satire on the Tories, loudly applauded every line in which liberty was mentioned; and the Tories echoed every clap, to show the Whigs that the satire was not felt.

Sir Charles. Thus, betwixt the Whigs and the Tories, the play proved so unexpectedly and so completely successful, that it was acted for thirty-five nights without intermission.

Edmund. The next important event in the life of Addison, was his marriage with the Countess Dowager of Warwick, to whose son he had been tutor. The courtship had been a long and tedious one; and it is related that, when her ladyship at last granted him her hand, she took care, in very intelligible terms, to let him understand how much she had condescended, in bestowing it upon one in a rank of life so much inferior to her own.

Lady Irwin. Here I again pity him; for it is well known that this marriage by no means tended to increase his happiness.

Sir Charles. The countess was of so overbearing a disposition, that it was pleasantly said by one of Addison's friends: "Holland House, (of which he thereby became possessed) though a large mansion, cannot contain the Countess of Warwick, Mr. Addison, and one guest, called *peace*."

Mr. Allen. She seems to have formed an opinion, not I fear a very uncommon, though assuredly a very erroneous one, that no culture of intellect, nor any exaltation of genius, can atone for the want of coronets and ancestry. The repulsive behaviour of the haughty countess often drove Mr. Addison from her society to that of his literary friends, and made him very unwilling to return to her from them.

Sir Charles. Dr. Johnson justly remarked, that Addison has not left behind him any encouragement to ambitious love.

Frederic. One of the consequences of his marriage, however, appears to have been his appointment, in the ensuing year, to the office of Secretary of State, the highest promotion that Mr. Addison ever attained.

Lady Irwin. I should not have imagined that he, a man devoted to literary pursuits, would have been calculated for the duties of such an office as this.

Sir Charles. He certainly was very unfit for them. It has been asserted, that he could not even issue an order without losing his time in quest of elegant expressions in which to word it. The consequence was, thut he shortly afterwards retired from office, with a pension of one thousand five hundred pounds a year, and gave up nearly the whole of his time to literature.

Edmund. In his leisure hours he had applied himself to the composition of a work on the "Evidences of the Christian Religion."

Mr. Allen. This was a well-intended production, and may be perused with advantage by persons who have not time to read larger treatises; but it is much inferior to the publications, on the same subject, by several later writers; particularly those of Paley, Beattie, and Watson.

The religious principles of Mr. Addison, are conspicuous in all his writings. These principles influenced him throughout his whole life, and particularly gladdened his latter days with serenity. Of this happy effect, his biographers have recorded one instance which

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is peculiarly affecting. You, Frederic, I know can relate it.

Frederic. I will do so, sir, as nearly as I can, in the words of Dr. Young, the poet, by whom it was recorded. After a long and manly, but vain struggle with disease, Mr. Addison dismissed his physicians, as no longer of service to him; and with them all hopes of life. But, with these hopes, he had not dismissed his concern for the living. He sent for the young Earl of Warwick, who immediately obeyed the summons. After a short pause, his lordship said to him, "Dear sir, you sent for me: I believe, and I hope that you have some commands: I shall hold them most sacred." Firmly grasping the hand of the youth, he only said, *"See in what peace a Christian can die!"* He spoke with difficulty, and soon afterwards breathed his last.

Lady Irwin. I have always admired this as one of the finest instances of Christian resignation that has been recorded, and as a most satisfactory proof of the value of religion, in administering comfort at the hour of death.

Frederic. Mr. Addison died on the seventeenth of June, 1719, in the forty-eighth year of his age.

Lady Irwin. What family did he leave?

Mr. Allen. One daughter, by the Countess of Warwick; of whom we are told that, she was brought up with so little veneration for the memory of her father, that, for a while, she entertained a marked dislike to his writings, and an unconquerable aversion to the perusal of them. She, however, was afterwards convinced of their excellence, and has been known to express very sincere regard for his memory.

Lady Irwin. Surely nothing could more plainly evince the evil disposition of the countess, than the educating of her own child in a contempt for the memory of her father.

Edmund. In the character of Mr. Addison, it was a somewhat singular circumstance, that, although he

must have been in the habit, during his whole life, of associating with the higher ranks of society, and was easy, fluent, and familiar in the company of his friends, yet, before strangers, he was reserved and silent; and so timorous, that Lord Chesterfield has declared, he was the most awkward man he ever saw.

Frederic. And yet, Lord Chesterfield, in one of his letters, has written that, he "used to think, he was in company as much above himself, when with Mr. Addison, or Mr. Pope, as if he had been with all the princes in Europe."

Sir Charles. That may have been the case. His lordship may have revered him for his talents, and, at the same time, have been fully sensible of his singularity of manners. To us, his works would alone have renderéd him highly estimable.

Mr. Allen. These, chiefly, were his tragedy of Cato; his papers in the Tatler, Spectator, and Guardian; and his "Evidences of the Christian Religion." On the breaking out of the Rebellion, in 1715, he published the "Freeholder," a kind of political Spectator. He was the author also of several pieces, both of Latin and English poetry.

TWENTY-SECOND EVENING.

Mr. Allen. I am particularly desirous of, this evening, proposing for discussion the life of Sir Richard Steele, because he was a man of considerable celebrity, a contempory and friend of Addison, and of a character so extremely different, that the contrast betwixt the two appears to me capable of yielding much instruction. Frederic, if you please, shall begin.

Frederic. It will give me great pleasure to do so. SIR RICHARD STEELE was an Irishman. He was born in Dublin, as some writers say, in 1671; and, according to others, about the year 1676. His father

was a barrister; and, through the interest of the Duke of Ormond, was enabled to have his son placed on the foundation of the Charter-house school in London. Steele was sent thither when very young; and, after his father's death, was removed to Merton College, Oxford. During his residence in the university, he is said to have been extremely careless and dissipated, though not altogether either immoral or irreligious. He was gay, gallant, and generous; distinguished by the brilliancy of his wit, the courtesy of his manners——

Edmund. And his imprudence. The entire dependance of Steele, at this period, was upon an uncle, who, could not endure a hero for his heir; and he, in the glow of military ardour, left the university without taking a degree, and enlisted as a private soldier in the horse-guards.

Frederic. He was afterwards, however, promoted to an ensigncy.

Mr. Allen. The moral character of this singular man is very instructive. He was one of those who are constantly the dupes of their own imagination. He always preferred his caprices to his interests. Though a man of admirable abilities, he was perpetually acting like a fool; and, with a warm attachment to virtue, was the most frail of human beings.

Edmund. In his military career, he was exposed to much irregularity; and yet, in the midst of his dissipation, he wrote, for his private use, a little book called "The Christian Hero." This was done with a design, principally, to fix upon his own mind, a strong impression of virtue and religion, in opposition to a stronger propensity towards unwarrantable pleasures. But this secret admonition proved too weak; and he resolved to print the book with his name, from this express and honourable motive, that it might serve as a "standing testimony against himself, and make him ashamed of understanding, and seeming to feel what was virtuous, and yet living so contrary a life."

Lady Irwin. This was an excellent project; and I hope was attended with good effect.

Mr. Allen. He has himself told us, it had no other effect than that, from having been thought a good companion, he was soon reckoned a disagreeable fellow.

Lady Irwin. Among his dissipated acquaintance, such might be expected; but if he had had the resolution to write and publish a book of this description, surely he had courage enough to maintain its principles.

Mr. Allen. He had not. Indeed, want of resolution seems to have been his chief bane through life. For his declarations as to religion, he found himself slighted, instead of encouraged; so that he has told us, he thought it incumbent upon him to enliven his character.

Lady Irwin. And in what manner did he do this?

Mr. Allen. In a way that, I am sure, your ladyship would never have imagined. He had a notion that nothing would tend to render a man so much esteemed by the world, as a successful play; so he now sat down to write a comedy. This he entitled "The Funeral; or Grief à-la-mode." It was acted with success; and obtained for him the particular notice of the king, William the Third, who made him some promises of preferment. But all his hopes vanished on the death of his royal patron.

Edmund. In the ensuing reign, however, he obtained, through the recommendation of Mr. Addison, the office of writership of the Gazette; which, with common prudence, might have supported him. Whilst he held this office, he wrote two other comedies, the "Tender Husband," and the "Lying Lovers;" the former of which was acted with success, and the latter was condemned. Disappointed, upon the whole, in his expectations from the stage, he now turned his thoughts to the project of his well-known periodical publication, the "Tatler."

Lady Irwin. This he printed under the fictitious

name of Bickerstaff. What was the reason of his so doing?

Edmund. Dean Swift had, not long before, published some humorous pieces, under the name of Isaac Bickerstaff, with such success, that Steele, to recommend his own work, assumed the same signature; having, however, secured the assistance of its original owner. The Tatler was received with universal approbation, and might have proved to him an important foundation of future prosperity, had he not been one of the most improvident men that ever existed.

Lady Irwin. But it is said, that the prudence of his wife operated as an useful check upon his extravagance.

Mr. Allen. I presume you speak of his second wife, who was a woman of fortune and great beauty. She was not merely prudent, she was parsimonious; for she hoarded up the greatest part of her own income, of which she had cautiously reserved the management almost entirely to herself.

Edmund. Hence it was that Steele gave her the name of *Prue,* or Prudence. They appear to have been almost always jarring, or quarrelling.

Mr. Allen. Steele's imprudence of generosity, or vanity of profusion, kept him incurably necessitous; and so inconsistent was his conduct, that it has been observed, he wrote essays on the follies of the day, in an enormous black wig, which cost him fifty guineas! He built an elegant villa at Hampton Court, to which he gave the name of "The Hovel!" He detected the fallacy of the South Sea scheme, while he himself invented projects, not inferior, either in magnificence or in misery! He even turned alchemist, and wanted to gain gold;—merely for the purpose of distributing it to others!

Lady Irwin. How extraordinary and how unaccountable a character! But I was not aware he had been a projector.

Mr. Allen. That was one of the leading features in

his character; and was, in a great measure, the cause of those embarrassments, in which he latterly became involved. Among his other schemes, he had one for conveying fish alive to market. He obtained a patent for the protection of it; but, instead of tending to retrieve his affairs, it only involved him more deeply in distress.

Edmund. The fame that Steele derived from the publication of the Tatler, obtained for him the situation of a Commissioner of the Stamp Duties; and at length induced him to procure a seat in the house of commons.

Lady Irwin. And what occurred to him as a member of parliament?

Edmund. He wrote certain pamphlets, which were deemed "scandalous and seditious," and he was expelled the house.

Frederic. This was in the reign of Queen Anne; but on the accession of George the First to the throne, in behalf of whom these pamphlets had been written, he was admitted into favour at court, received the honour of knighthood, and appointed to the office of surveyor of the royal stables at Hampton Court. He shortly afterwards obtained a share in the patent of one of the playhouses; which was a source of considerable emolument to him.

Mr. Allen. But as he still wanted economy, so he was still involved in difficulties. I will relate to you a circumstance that occured on his inviting several persons of rank to dine with him. They were astonished by an unusual number of livery servants which surrounded his table. After dinner, one of them inquired, "How so expensive a train of domestics could be consistent with his fortune?"—"Oh!" he replied, "they are fellows of whom I would very willingly be rid." Being asked "why he did not discharge them?" he acknowledged that they were bailiffs, who had taken possession of his house, in consequence of a debt which he was unable to discharge; and

whom, as he could not send them away, he had thought it convenient to put into livery, that they might at least do him credit as long as they stayed.

Lady Irwin. It was impossible that such a man should ever be long free from embarrassment. But how did this procedure terminate?

Mr. Allen. His friends, diverted by the expedient, paid the debt, and thus discharged the attendants; at the same time obliging Steele solemnly to promise, that they "should never find him graced with such a retinue again."

Frederic. But his heedless prodigality was incorrigible; and, at length, involved in lawsuits, and other apparently inextricable difficulties, he retired into Wales, where he was seized with a paralytic disorder, which terminated his life, on the first of September, 1729.

Mr. Allen. The writings of Sir Richard Steele, notwithstanding the unaccountable singularity of his own conduct, are all favourable to the cause of religion and virtue. No one ever attempted, with greater success than he, to form the mind to virtue, or to polish the manners of common life; and no one ever better inculcated the most useful and instructive lessons.

He wrote a principal part of the Tatler, and a considerable proportion of the papers in the Spectator, and the Guardian. These are for the most part known by the signature T. He was likewise the author of the comedies of the "Funeral," the "Tender Husband," and "Lying Lovers." His epistolary correspondence has lately been published; and several of his miscellaneous pieces have been reprinted in one volume, entitled, "The Town Talk; the Fish-pool; the Plebeian; the Old Whig; the Spinsters; &c. By the Authors of the Tatler, Spectator and Guardian."

TWENTY-THIRD EVENING.

Frederic. We have lately spoken of the lives of two eminent general writers, Addison, and Steele; whose characters were widely different. I will this evening introduce a third, that of the Dean of St. Patrick's, Dr. JONATHAN SWIFT; whose character is very unlike that of either of the other two.

Mr. Allen. Little that is amiable is to be found either in the character or conduct of Swift. A stern, inflexible temper and pride in a supreme degree, were the basis upon which were built firmness, and perhaps sincerity; but these alloyed with arrogance, implacability, carelessness of giving pain, and a total want of candour. Addison was a man of mild and amiable manners, and Steele had great natural amenity of disposition; but Swift was obdurate, unfeeling, and often morose and sullen.

Frederic stated, respecting him, that he was the posthumous son of Jonathan Swift, an attorney in Dublin; in which city he had been born, in the year 1667: that his mother, though left in distressed circumstances, had been compelled by grief, and a bad state of health, to put him out to nurse, when about a year old; and that the nurse, having occasion to visit a sick relative at Whitehaven, conveyed the child to England without the knowledge of his mother, and kept him with her during three years, which she spent in this country.

Lady Irwin. You speak of Swift having been an Irishman. I thought it had not been decided whether this really had been the case or not.

Sir Charles. From his early residence in England, and his mother having, during his childhood, lived with her friends at Leicester, many persons have imagined him to have been an Englishman; and he was often heard to exclaim, when out of humour with

the Irish, that he was so; yet, in his cooler hours, he never denied the real country of his birth.

Lady Irwin. Then, as he was brought to England when a child, and as his mother afterwards resided in England, I presume he was educated in this country.

Frederic. No, he was educated first in a school at Kilkenny, and afterwards at Trinity College, Dublin; where he was supported by the bounty of his uncle, Mr. Goodwin Swift, an eminent barrister.

Lady Irwin. What was his behaviour in college?

Edmund. He was perfectly regular, and, in every respect, obedient to the academical discipline; yet he was little regarded, and less beloved, by his companions. The academical exercises also were not suited to his taste. His favourite studies were history and poetry, in which he made great progress; but he had so little applied his mind to other branches of science, that, when he presented himself, at the usual period, as a candidate for the degree of bachelor of arts, he was set aside on account of insufficiency; and he at last obtained his degree by an act, as it was termed, of "especial favour," *(speciali gratia)* which in Dublin implies the greatest reproach.

Sir Charles. It has always appeared to me perfectly unaccountable, that a man of his unquestionable talent, should thus have suffered himself to be degraded, from the want of only very moderate application to those studies which were required by the college.

Frederic. Swift imagined himself to have been unfairly treated; left Dublin, and went to Oxford. Here, to recover his lost time, he applied with extraordinary assiduity; and is said to have studied, on an average, at least eight hours a day for seven years.

Mr. Allen. This part of his history, as Dr. Johnson has justly remarked, well deserves to be remembered. It affords an useful admonition, and a powerful encouragement to persons whose abilities may have been rendered, for a time, useless by their passions, or their pleasures; and who, having lost one part of life

in idleness, are tempted to throw away the remainder in despair.

Frederic. It ought to have been observed that, before Swift had left the university, his uncle, from a disordered mind, and the consequent disarrangement of his affairs, had become unable to support him any longer; that the subsequent part of his expenses were defrayed by Sir William Temple, whose lady was distantly related to Swift's mother; and that, upon quitting the university, he went to reside in the house of Sir William. Here he passed two years; and, though in the mean time, he was afflicted with a long and dangerous illness, contracted by eating an immoderate quantity of fruit, he continued indefatigable in his studies.

Lady Irwin. For what particular profession had Swift been educated?

Frederic. There can be little doubt but he looked forward to the church as his most probable profession; though, at one time, he entertained hopes of some situation in the state. It is, however, certain that he was admitted into holy orders in the year 1694.

Edmund. King William the Third promised him the first vacancy which should happen among the prependaries of Westminster, or Canterbury. He was disappointed in this expectation; but the Earl of Berkeley procured for him the rectory of Agher, with the vicarages of Laracor, and Rathbeggan, in the diocess of Meath; worth, together, about two hundred and sixty pounds a year.

Frederic. Yet these were a source of disappointment to him. He had hoped to obtain something much better.

Mr. Allen. Swift, through his whole life, was a disappointed man; but how far, justly, I will not attempt to say. He used to relate that, when a little boy, he once went a fishing; that he felt a great fish at the end of his line, which he drew up almost to the land, but it dropt in: and that the disappointment which he

experienced, and which long continued to vex him, he considered a type of all his future disappointments.

Lady Irwin. I cannot imagine Swift to have had much fervour of piety, or to have been peculiarly zealous in the discharge of his clerical duties.

Frederic. There are two stories told of him, which, if true, would prove your ladyship's conjecture to be correct. After he had taken possession of his livings, he gave public notice to his parishioners at Laracor, that he would read public prayers every Wednesday and Friday. On the subsequent Wednesday, the bell was rung, and he ascended the desk. But, after remaining there some time, and finding that the congregation consisted only of himself and the clerk, he began the service with great composure, "Dearly beloved Roger, the Scripture moveth you and me in sundry places;" and so proceeded to the end of the service.

The other story would prove him still more blameable. He was on a visit to his friend, the Rev. Dr. Raymond, vicar of Trim. After dinner, one Sunday, as the bells were ringing for evening prayers, he laid a trifling wager with the doctor, that he would begin the prayers before him. They ran, as fast as they could, to the church. Dr. Raymond, the nimbler of the two, arrived first at the door, entered the church, and proceeded with decency to put on the surplice. Swift, not slackening his pace, ran up the aisle, and stepping into the desk, began the service without ceremony, and thus won his wager.

Lady Irwin. These must surely have been fabrications. Unfavourably as I think of his character in general, I will not believe Swift to have been guilty of such indecent levity as this.

Mr. Allen. In many respects, however, he appears to have conducted himself with little decorum as a clergyman. In his annual journies to Leicester, to see his mother, he travelled as no other person in his situation of life would have done. He always went on foot,

except when the weather was bad, and then he took a place in one of the road waggons. He generally dined at obscure ale-houses, with waggoners, pedlars, ostlers, and similar company; and lodged wherever he saw written or painted over the door, "Lodgings for a penny;" though he usually bribed the maid with sixpence, for a separate bed, and clean sheets.

Lady Irwin. Could this have originated in an affectation of singularity, or in narrow and parsimonious habits.

Mr. Allen. I am inclined to think from singularity only, for many acts of his generosity have been recorded. For instance, the first five hundred pounds that he could call his own, he lent in small sums, to diligent and necessitous tradesmen, to be repaid by weekly instalments, and without interest. This does not appear like parsimony.

Edmund. During his residence at Laracor, Swift invited to Ireland, a young lady, whose name was Johnson; and whom he has celebrated by the appellation of Stella. She was the daughter of Sir William Temple's steward; had a small independent fortune, and was at that time about eighteen years of age. When resident in the house of Sir William, Swift had assisted in cultivating and improving her mind; and she was now extremely beautiful and accomplished. Miss Johnson accepted the invitation, and went to Ireland, accompanied by her friend, Mrs. Dingley.

Sir Charles. This was certainly one of the most singular connexions that ever was formed; nor is it possible now to ascertain, whether Swift was originally desirous of the society of Stella as a wife, or a friend. They never lived in the same house. When Swift was absent, the ladies resided at his parsonage; but when he returned, they always removed, either to the house of his friend, Dr. Raymond, or to a lodging. Nor were Miss Johnson and Swift ever known to have met, except in the presence of a third person.

Frederic. Not long after Miss Johnson first went to Ireland, Queen Anne succeeded to the English throne, and Swift came to this country, where he took his degree of doctor of divinity. He continued to reside here for some time; and now commenced his career as a political writer on the side of the party called the Whigs; which, during a considerable interval of this reign, had the ascendancy in public affairs.

Edmund. The queen had been so much pleased with the political conduct of Swift, that it is supposed she would have given him a bishopric, had not Archbishop Sharpe, according to Swift's own account, represented him to her majesty as not being a Christian. This was the consequence of his having been the author of a satirical work, entitled " A Tale of a Tub."

Sir Charles He had, however, obtained what most persons would have been inclined to call good preferment; for, in 1713, he had been made Dean of St. Patrick's, Dublin.

Frederic. His writings had, at this time, rendered him so obnoxious in Ireland, that his reception in Dublin was not very flattering. The rabble had been taught, by his enemies, to consider him connected with the Pretender, the son of James the Second; and they carried their detestation so far, as to pelt him with stones and mud, on his way through the streets. The clergy, and others belonging to St. Patrick's, also received him with great reluctance. He was thwarted in all his measures, avoided as a pestilence, opposed as an intruder, and marked out as a public enemy.

Lady Irwin. And how did this terminate?

Sir Charles. Fewer talents, and less firmness, than those which Swift possessed, must have yielded to such opposition. But so strange are, often, the revolutions which take place in the opinions of mankind, that he lived, as we soon shall see, to govern, with absolute sway, the very rabble that had thus insulted him.

Lady Irwin. You have spoken of Stella: it did not

occur to me, to ask you the particulars relative to another female favourite of Swift, whom he styled Vanessa.

Frederic. Her name was Vanhomrigh. Her father was a Dutch merchant, who had settled and died in Dublin. She had a passion for reading, and some taste for poetry; and entertained so strong an attachment for Swift, that she even made him an offer of marriage. He affected to believe her in jest; then rallied her on so whimsical a choice; and, at last, put her off, without an absolute refusal. This was after his marriage with Stella. Miss Vanhomrigh suspected that Swift's conduct was not altogether correct; and wrote to Stella, to inquire whether she was, or was not, married. The answer was in the affirmative.

Mr. Allen. And proved a death-warrant to poor Vanessa, who survived the sad intelligence only a few weeks.

Sir Charles. I can scarcely imagine the conduct of any man to have been more unprincipled than that of Swift towards this unfortunate lady. Of her death, a late writer has remarked, that Swift was as directly, and as guiltily, the cause, as if he had plunged a dagger into her heart.

Mr. Allen. But we have yet to speak of the marriage and death of Stella.

Sir Charles. There again, favourite as she deservedly was in his esteem, he conducted himself as no man of principle could have done. After she had been in Ireland about sixteen years, he was induced to marry her; but, from an extraordinary caprice, he did this on an express condition, that their marriage should never be divulged, and that they should continue to live separately as before.

Lady Irwin. These were terms which no man had a right to prescribe.

Sir Charles. Stella, however, having no alternative, betwixt her affection for Swift, and the fear of losing him for ever, assented to them. But her state was

afterwards most deplorable. She became the prey of melancholy; and, at length, finding her dissolution approach, entreated of him to grant a dying request: "As the ceremony of marriage had passed between them, in order to put it out of the power of slander to be busy with her fame after her death; she adjured him, by their friendship, to let her have the satisfaction of dying at least, though she had not lived, his acknowledged wife!" With an inhumanity scarcely ever exceeded, he made no reply; but, turning from her, walked out of the room: nor ever saw her afterwards during the few days she lived.

Lady Irwin. Every one must detest a mind that could dictate such conduct to an amiable, affectionate, and unoffending female. But you spoke of Swift having attained great popularity; pray afford me some relief from the lamentable history of Stella, by stating the particulars.

Sir Charles. A patent, as it is said, had been surreptitiously obtained by a person whose name was Wood, to coin, for the Irish people, half-pence, to the value of one hundred and eighty thousand pounds. By this privilege he would have derived an enormous profit; and, proportionally, have impoverished the nation. Swift, under the appellation of Drapier, addressed a series of letters to the people, urging them not to receive this money; and Wood, though powerfully supported, was compelled to withdraw his patent. This was considered so great a service to the public, that, even before Swift was known to have been the author of the letters, the name of Drapier was hailed with universal acclamation.

Frederic. At first he did not dare to acknowledge himself the author, for the fourth letter contained several libellous passages. Indeed, that letter had been selected as a ground for prosecution; and a proclamation was issued, offering a reward of three hundred pounds for the discovery of the author.

Sir Charles. It was on this occasion that an incident

occurred, which displays the peculiar character of Swift in a favourable light. Frederic, I dare say, will recollect it.

Frederic. He had employed his butler to transcribe the letters, previously to their being sent to the press. This man, soon after the appearance of the proclamation, had absented himself one night from the deanery, and there was reason to believe he had betrayed his master. On his return, in the morning, the dean ordered him to strip off his livery, and quit the house. "I know," said he, "that I am in your power; but, for that very reason, I will not bear either your insolence, or neglect!" The man, who had merely yielded to the temptation of drinking, confessed his fault, and entreated to be forgiven; but the dean was inexorable. The man was dismissed, and not again received till the term of the offered reward had expired. Soon after this, his master sent for him. He ordered all the servants to attend, and told them to observe, that Robert was no longer their fellow-servant, but Mr. Blakeney, verger of St. Patrick's; which place he had procured for him in reward for his fidelity. The grateful man, however, continued to officiate as his butler for several years afterwards.

Mr. Allen. I am inclined to allow the dean considerable merit for this prompt dismissal of his servant; though it was at least possible he might know that the man would not dare to betray him.

Frederic. How so, sir?

Mr. Allen. From a dread of the resentment of that populace, which, on another occasion, Swift said to Dr. Boulter, Archbishop of Armagh, "If I had lifted my finger they would have torn you to pieces."

Sir Charles. We now approach a most dark and melancholy period. After the death of Stella, Swift became extremely retired; the natural austerity of his temper increased, and he shunned the society even of his most intimate friends. Fits of giddiness and deafness, to which he had occasionally been subject,

became more frequent and more severe; and his memory gradually decayed. At length his passions became so ungovernable, his memory so imperfect, and his reason so depraved, that, from the year 1739, the utmost precautions were taken to prevent strangers from approaching him. Early in 1742, the small remains of his understanding became wholly confused, and the violence of his rage increased to a degree of madness. His meat was brought to him cut into morsels, which he generally ate walking. Several large boils broke out on his body. These, by the pain they caused, kept him awake nearly a whole month; during one week of which, it was with difficulty that five persons restrained him, by mere force, from tearing out his own eyes. He afterwards sunk into a state of total insensibility, slept much, and could not, without much persuasion, be induced to walk across the room. He had continued silent, in a state of perfect idiotcy for a whole year, when his housekeeper entered his room on his birth-day, and told him that, "bonfires and illuminations were preparing to celebrate it:" he immediately replied, "It is all folly; they had better let it alone."

Lady Irwin. How awful an history! And how extraordinary a sentence to have been uttered after so long a silence!

Sir Charles. Subsequently to this he had a few lucid intervals. In 1744, he occasionally called his servant by name; and once, in an attempt to speak to him, not being able to express his meaning, he showed great uneasiness, and at last exclaimed, "I am a fool." He continued a miserable spectacle of human weakness, till the end of October, 1745; when, every power of nature being exhausted, he expired, without a struggle, in the seventy-eighth year of his age.

Mr. Allen. It is scarcely possible to imagine a more awful lesson than that which the life of Swift exhibits. Whatever had been the feelings of anguish which he had inflicted upon others, these were, at last, severely

visited upon himself; and if we could dare to pronounce concerning the decrees of Providence, we might almost suppose him to have been a living monument of the recompense of cruelty.

Sir Charles. But it is time we should speak of his writings, which are extremely numerous.

Mr. Allen. They are so numerous as to admit of only a very general account of them, the last edition having been published in nineteen volumes in octavo. Those which have obtained the greatest celebrity are, the "Tale of a Tub," "Gulliver's Travels," "Drapier's Letters," and his voluminous "Correspondence." As a writer, Swift was original, and probably will, in some respects, always be unparalleled. In a grave style of wit he was inferior to none. His irony is maintained with such an air of simplicity, that it would deceive any reader not aware of his drift. His writings abound in ludicrous ideas of every kind: these are abundantly interspersed in his poems, but they too often deviate into grossness. That he was capable of high polish and elegance, some of his pieces sufficiently prove; but his habitual taste led him to the humorous, the familiar, and sarcastic. His prose writings have been considered a model of purity, clearness, and simplicity; and have been spoken of with exaggerated praise. He certainly expresses his meaning with perfect precision; but this is done without grace, and he is chiefly remarkable for a great choice and profusion of common words and expressions. Were it possible for Swift to revive, he would, probably, attain little distinction as a didactic, or argumentative writer; though in that severe species of wit and humour, for which he was remarkable, he would not find a rival.

TWENTY-FOURTH EVENING.

On the subject of style in prose writing, Frederic, this evening, remarked, there was none with which he had been more pleased, than that of Dr. Goldsmith; particularly in his interesting little novel, "The Vicar of Wakefield." He did not profess to consider himself a judge of literary merit, but he could not refrain from stating, after the conversation of last night, relative to the style of Swift's writings, the interest that he had experienced in reading the works of this author. Edmund said, that he very much admired Goldsmith's "History of the Earth and Animated Nature;" but Frederic, who, under the tuition of Mr. Allen, had become somewhat of a naturalist, observed that, the elegance of its style he would readily admit; but that he could not certainly say he admired the work: as, with even his inexperience in natural history, he had been able to detect in it a great number of errors.

Mr. Allen. Dr. Johnson, who well knew the author's ignorance of this subject, one day said to a friend, during the time that Goldsmith was writing it, that, "he would make his natural history as entertaining as a Persian tale."

Lady Irwin. Was not Dr. Goldsmith a native of Yorkshire?

Frederic. He was an Irishman, born in the parish of Forney, and county of Longford, on the twenty-ninth of November, 1728.

Lady Irwin. What were the particulars of his education?

Frederic. His father was a clergyman of the Established Church. He had seven children, five sons and two daughters; and an income so small, as not to admit of his giving to all of them a literary education. Oliver, the son of whom we are speaking, was, consequently, intended for a mercantile employ-

ment. His instruction in reading, writing, and arithmetic, was obtained at a common school, the master of which was an old soldier. This man had been a quarter-master in Queen Anne's wars, and, having travelled much, and having a romantic imagination, amused his pupil with marvellous stories of his own adventures; and is supposed to have imparted to his mind the first tincture of that wandering and unsettled disposition, by which it was afterwards so strongly marked.

Lady Irwin. But was he not distinguished in his youth by strong traits of genius?

Frederic. Yes; and these induced the friends of his father to contribute towards the expense of placing him in a reputable school, for the purpose of his being afterwards sent to the University of Dublin. He was admitted a member of Trinity College, in his fifteenth year; but under a tutor of such harsh and overbearing disposition, that he sank into despair. At length, having sold his books and clothes, he left college, and commenced a wanderer without any views even of subsistence; without friends, and almost without money. Not long after this he suffered such extremity of hunger that, in one instance, we are informed, a handful of peas, which a girl gave him at a wake, was considered a luxurious meal.

Lady Irwin. And what, Frederic, became of him after this?

Frederic. His elder brother, Henry, clothed him afresh, took him back to college, and effected a reconciliation betwixt him and his tutor.

Mr. Allen. He had next the misfortune to lose his father; and his friends were desirous that he should prepare himself for holy orders; but Goldsmith objected to a clerical life, as not suited to the general turn of his disposition.

Frederic. So he chose, when he left college, to become a tutor in a private family.

Edmund. And this kind of life soon became so irk-

some to him that, with thirty pounds in his pocket, he set out as a wanderer about the country; and, after an absence of six weeks, having, in the mean time, gone through a series of whimsical adventures, he returned to his mother's house without a penny.

Sir Charles. His whole life was a series of imprudences, and affords an useful lesson of the miseries to which even a successful man must be subject, if he be inattentive to the common concerns of life. What, I would ask, happened immediately after he was reconciled to his mother and his friends? He was supplied with money at his own request, was sent to the Temple to study the law; and, in his way, met with a sharper, who tempted him to play at cards, cheated him of fifty pounds, and once again ruined him.

Mr. Allen. This conduct was extremely blameable, for Goldsmith well knew his friends could ill indeed afford to supply him with money.

Sir Charles. They were, however, abundantly kind to him. They again received him; and, as he had now resolved to think no more of the law, but to study physic, they sent him to Edinburgh; where, though with little regularity or perseverance, he applied himself to attain a knowledge of the several branches of medicine under the professors in that university.

Lady Irwin. And what were his progress and success there?

Frederic. Goldsmith had always something that pleased him better than stated application. In Edinburgh he was chiefly desirous of recommending himself to the notice of his fellow-students, as a social companion, and a man of humour; consequently his progress in study was not very rapid; and, after he had been there somewhat more than twelve months, he was obliged to leave the place with precipitation, in consequence of having become security for the payment of a debt contracted by one of his associates. He embarked on board a ship for Bourdeaux, with some Scotchmen, who had been enlisting soldiers for the French army;

but the vessel being driven, by stress of weather, to take shelter in the river Tyne, he was arrested, and cast into prison.

Mr. Allen. This proved to him a singularly providential event; for the ship sailed during the time he was in prison, was wrecked at the mouth of the Garonne, and every person on board perished. His uncle, who had hitherto chiefly supported him, relieved him after a fortnight's confinement, equipped him afresh, and procured him a passage, on board a Dutch ship, to Rotterdam, from whence he was to proceed to Leyden, to complete his medical studies.

Edmund. Never, certainly, had this man his equal in carelessness and imprudence. After having continued in Leyden about a year, he again ruined himself by gaming, and borrowed a sum of money to enable him to return to England.

Frederic. Yes; and before he left the country, he spent the whole of it at a Dutch florist's, in purchasing costly flowers as a present for his uncle; and set out on his travels possessed of only one clean shirt, and without any money in his pocket.

Sir Charles. In such circumstances any other man than Goldsmith would have laid his account with starving; but he has himself told us, that, in the midst of his wretchedness, he had always "a knack at hoping."

Mr. Allen. And what, in this miserable plight, would have been thought insanity in any other person, he resolved——

Lady Irwin. To return of course immediately to England, to be re-equipped by the kindness of his friends, and, I presume, was now disappointed.

Mr. Allen. No; to make the tour of Europe.

Lady Irwin. Admirable! without a shilling in his pocket. Pray how was that to be accomplished?

Frederic. He had some knowledge of the French language, and played tolerably well on the German flute. It is said, that his learning produced him a

hospitable reception at most of the monasteries, and that his music insured him a welcome from the peasants. He was enabled to pursue his rambles, which he performed on foot, partly by demanding, at the universities, to enter the lists as a disputant; by which, according to the custom of many of them, he was entitled, on a sufficient display of talent, to a reward in money, a dinner, and a bed for the night. When he arrived at Geneva, he was recommended as a travelling tutor to a young man, who had been clerk to an attorney, but who, by the death of an uncle, had become possessed of a considerable sum of money, and was determined, on the receipt of his fortune, to see the world.

Lady Irwin. Why, this is nearly the history of George Primrose, the philosophical vagabond, in the Vicar of Wakefield.

Mr. Allen. Whose character, perhaps your ladyship may not be aware, was intended, by Goldsmith, as an outline of his own.

Lady Irwin. I did not know this before.

Frederic. It was part of the agreement between Goldsmith and his pupil, that, although he was to be the tutor, the pupil was, in every particular, to govern himself; and Goldsmith soon found that the young gentleman had a perfect knowledge of the value of money, and that avarice was his predominant passion. It may easily be imagined that, with dispositions so different, these two persons would not long continue together; and so it turned out. They proceeded from Geneva to the south of France, where they quarrelled; and the pupil, having paid the small portion of salary which was due to Goldsmith, embarked at Marseilles and left him there. After having wandered through the most interesting parts of Italy, for about six months, Goldsmith bent his course toward England, and landed at Dover, in the year 1756.

Sir Charles. He was, at this time, about twenty-eight years of age.

Mr. Allen. And the state of his finances was such that, on his arrival in London, his whole stock of money amounted only to a few half-pence. He had now to seek for a new means of subsistence.

Edmund. And, for that purpose, applied, under a feigned name, to several apothecaries, with the hope of being received in the capacity of a journeyman.

Frederic. Humiliating as this procedure must have been to a man of education, Goldsmith was unsuccessful. His broad Irish accent, and the general slovenliness and uncouthness of his appearance, exposed him, in many instances, even to insult. A chemist in the city, however, commiserating his forlorn appearance, and the simplicity of his manner, hired him as an assistant in his laboratory. By the aid of a respectable physician, whom he had formerly known, Goldsmith, after a little while, was liberated from this degrading employment.

Sir Charles. It would be an endless task for Frederic to go through all the particulars of the various fortune of Goldsmith. I will, therefore, endeavour to shorten the story, by stating that he appears next to have settled as a physician; but that finding, as he himself said, "Plenty of patients, but no fees;" or, in other words, being wholly devoid of perseverance, he gave up this project, and engaged himself as an assistant in a school for young gentlemen at Peckham. It was in this situation that Goldsmith first appears to have earned any money by the exertions of his pen; and, after a little while, he was induced to leave it, by an offer from the editor of the Monthly Review of lodging, board, and a handsome salary, on condition that he should write some of the leading articles in that work. He at the same time conducted the Lady's Magazine for another bookseller, and published other works which proved eminently successful.

Lady Irwin. I am glad to hear that he at last became settled. I shall now hope to be informed of his reformation. He who could so well instruct others, must,

surely, have himself felt the benefits of a serious turn of mind.

Edmund. He was still bent upon wandering; and actually applied to Lord Bute, then the prime minister, for a salary to enable him to go into Asia, for the purpose of acquiring a knowledge, as far as might be, of any arts peculiar to the East, and introducing them into this country. But his application was treated with neglect.

Frederic. When this project was mentioned to Dr. Johnson, he replied, "Of all men that I know, Goldsmith is the most unfit to go out upon such an inquiry; for he is utterly ignorant of such arts as we already possess, and consequently could not know what would be accessions to our present stock of mechanical knowledge. Sir, he would bring home a grinding-barrow, which you see in every street of London, and think he had furnished a wonderful improvement."

Mr. Allen. This observation appears to have been perfectly in character; for no one knew the real merits and mind of Goldsmith better than Dr. Johnson. There can be no doubt but he had almost as little knowledge of the world as a child. The proofs of this, and of his excessive vanity, are almost innumerable.

Edmund. I well recollect one anecdote illustrative of his simplicity.

Frederic. And I several of his vanity.

Edmund. After he had attained some celebrity as an author, he was requested to wait upon the late Duke of Northumberland, in consequence of the satisfaction which that nobleman had received from the perusal of one of his publications. Goldsmith related to a friend this account of his visit: "I dressed myself in the best manner I could, and, after studying some compliments, which I thought were necessary on such an occasion, proceeded to Northumberland House, and acquainted the servants, that 'I had particular business with his grace.' They showed me into

an anti-chamber, where, after waiting some time, a gentleman very elegantly dressed made his appearance. Taking him for the duke, I delivered all the fine things I had composed, in order to compliment him on the honour he had done me; when, to my great astonishment, he told me, 'I had mistaken him for his master, who would see me immediately.' At that instant the duke came into the apartment; and I was so confounded, that I wanted words barely sufficient to express the sense I entertained of his politeness, and went away excessively chagrined at the blunder I had committed."

Frederic. But this was not the only disagreeable consequence of the visit. Notwithstanding the embarrassment he had experienced, Goldsmith was vain of the honour, and was continually mentioning it. A bailiff, who had a writ against him, had heard of this vanity, and determined to turn it to his own advantage. He wrote a letter to Goldsmith, informing him that "he was steward to a nobleman, who had been charmed with reading his last production, and begged to have the pleasure of seeing him." The poor author became the dupe of his own folly, assented to accompany the pretended steward, was arrested on the way, and thrown into prison.

Lady Irwin. I certainly never before heard of so weak a man, and yet so able a writer as this. I really am not much surprised at Lord Orford having, on one occasion, denominated him "an inspired idiot."

Frederic. Goldsmith, though his person was short, his countenance coarse and vulgar, and his general deportment extremely awkward, was peculiarly anxious to be admired for his dress. He one day went to a club, of which he, Dr. Johnson, and other literary men, were members, in a glaring bloom-coloured coat, and strutted about, looking at his clothes, seemingly desirous of attracting the attention of the company. Some of them ridiculed his finery. To prove how wrong they

were, he pettishly said, "Let me tell you, gentlemen, when my tailor brought home this coat, he begged of me to tell all my friends who made it."

Sir Charles. On which Johnson replied, "that was because he knew the strange colour would attract crowds to gaze at it, and thus they might hear of him, and see how well he could make a coat even of so absurd a colour!"

Frederic. But the envy of Goldsmith was even more absurd than his vanity. He once accompanied two beautiful young ladies to Paris, and was seriously offended because greater attention was paid to them than to himself. Indeed any peculiar distinctions shown to other persons excited his envy, and that, sometimes, to an excess which seems scarcely credible. He was one day at an exhibition of puppets called the *Fantocini*, when some persons, who sat next him, observed with what dexterity one of them was made to toss a pike. Ridiculous as it may seem, even this praise he could not bear; and he exclaimed with warmth, "Pshaw! I can do it better myself." He went home with Mr. Burke to supper, and actually broke his shin by attempting to exhibit to the company, how much better he could jump over a stick than one of the puppets had done.

Lady Irwin. I am inclined to conclude, from what you have said, that it must have been the vanity of Goldsmith which led him to a silly mode of attempting to exhibit talents in conversation to which he was unequal; and thus, on many occasions, rendering himself unpleasantly conspicuous in literary society.

Mr. Allen. It was so. Dr. Johnson was accustomed to say, it was Goldsmith's misfortune to go on in conversation, without knowing how he was to get off: that his genius was great, but his knowledge small; and that, as he had no settled notions on any subject, so he always talked at random. "It seemed to be his intention to blurt out whatever was in his mind, and

see what would become of it." Yet Johnson has said of him that "whatever he wrote, he did better than any other man could have done."

Sir Charles. Boswell has remarked, apparently from an observation of Dr. Johnson, that "his mind resembled a fertile but thin soil. There was a quick but not a strong vegetation of whatever chanced to be sown. No deep root could be struck. The oak of the forest did not grow there; but the elegant shrubbery and the fragrant parterre."

Lady Irwin. This observation appears to me perfectly correct, and may be applied to all his works; which certainly have much elegance, but seem to be wanting in that depth of knowledge, and that strength of intellect, which are so visible in the writings of his great contemporary, Dr. Johnson, and those of some other eminent men of his own time.

Mr. Allen. Perhaps it may not be unamusing to run over the dates of Goldsmith's principal works, of which I believe I have a tolerably good recollection. His admirable little story, the "Vicar of Wakefield," was published in 1760; the poem called the "Traveller," in 1765; his comedy, the "Good-natured Man," was successfully performed at Covent Garden Theatre in 1768; his "Deserted Village," was published in 1769; in 1772, his comedy of "She Stoops to Conquer;" and early in 1774, his "History of the Earth and Animated Nature."

Sir Charles. An anecdote has been related of the publication of the Deserted Village, which places the character of Goldsmith, as a man of integrity and simplicity of mind, in a very favourable point of view. A bookseller had given him a hundred pounds for the copy-right. Goldsmith mentioned this to one of his friends a few hours afterwards; and his friend remarked, that it was "a very large sum for so short a performance, being nearly five shillings a line."—"In truth," replied Goldsmith, "I think so too. It certainly is much more than the honest man can afford to give, or

than the piece is worth. I have not been easy since I received it. I will, therefore, go back and return him his note." This he actually did, and left it to the bookseller to pay him in proportion to the profits produced by the sale of the poem, which proved very considerable.

Mr. Allen. It is a remarkable circumstance relative to the writings and conduct of Goldsmith, that, unsettled and unsteady as he was, he had application enough to produce several extensive compilations, among which are to be enumerated, his "History of England," and "History of the Earth and Animated Nature." His writings were so successful that he received from the booksellers at least eight thousand pounds in the course of fourteen years, and yet he was almost always in debt.

Sir Charles. His poverty is easily to be accounted for. Goldsmith certainly derived great profits from his works; but, being extremely deficient in economy, and continuing addicted to gaming, though little acquainted with the frauds of gamesters, he became the prey of those who were unprincipled enough to take advantage of his prodigality or ignorance. We are also told that he was constantly beset by his own countrymen in distress, whose wants, as far as he was able, he always relieved; and, it is said, that he often left himself without a guinea, in order to alleviate the necessities of others.

Mr. Allen. The death of Goldsmith seems to have been as extraordinary, and as probably induced by his own obstinacy, as the misfortunes of his life had been occasioned by his excessive imprudence. He was seized by a nervous fever; and, contrary to the advice of all his medical friends, persisted in an improper use of James's fever powder, as a specific on which he solely depended for the restoration of his health. This expected remedy is said to have been the more immediate cause of his death, which took place on the fourth of April, 1774, in the forty-

fifth year of his age. He was interred in the burying ground of the Temple; and a monument was erected to his memory in Westminster Abbey.

Lady Irwin. You have as yet said nothing of the poetry of Goldsmith.

Mr. Allen. He is usually considered rather as a poet of reason, than of fancy or pathos. The Traveller, however, is a noble production. Its sentiments are always interesting, generally just, and often new. Its imagery is elegant, picturesque, and occasionally sublime; and its language nervous, highly finished, and full of harmony. It is far superior to the Deserted Village, which, with many beautiful passages, is defective in closeness of compression and novelty of imagery, and, as it has been remarked, is sicklied over with a tone of affected or morbid melancholy.

TWENTY-FIFTH EVENING.

Sir Charles. We, yesterday, had occasion to speak of the style of Goldsmith's prose-writings. It is undoubtedly fluent and animated; but it is by no means comparable with that of his great contemporary, Dr. SAMUEL JOHNSON. "The Rambler," for instance, contains some of the finest sentiments that can be imagined, recommended and embellished by the greatest harmony and splendour of language.

Mr. Allen. The style of Johnson has formed a kind of era in English composition. It is distinguished by a preference for words of Latin extraction, by the frequent use of abstract terms, and by an arrangement of clauses peculiarly calculated to produce a sonorous rotundity of period. He delivers moral maxims, and dictatorial sentences with wonderful force. Hence he has been aptly styled, the *Jupiter tonans* of religion and morality. It is deserving of remark, that

Johnson appears first to have assumed his pomp of diction in the Rambler, at the time that he was proceeding with his Dictionary; and that, in the course of his work, as he grew familiar with technical and scholastic words, he seems to have thought the bulk of his readers were equally learned with himself, or, at least, that they would admire his style in proportion to its splendour and dignity.

Frederic. And yet he could unbend, and accommodate himself to other notions of excellence; for, in his periodical publication of the "Idler," it was requisite, in order to be consistent with the plan of the work, that he should assume a style of ease and unlaboured elegance, and it is generally been considered that he has, in this respect, been successful.

Sir Charles. Are you prepared with the life of Johnson?

Edmund. We are both prepared, sir.

Sir Charles. I wish then you would proceed with it to-night.

Edmund. I will commence by stating, that Dr. Johnson was born at Litchfield, in Staffordshire, in the year 1709. His father was a bookseller, a man of athletic form, and violent passions; wrong headed, and, at times, afflicted with a degree of melancholy little short of madness. His mother was a woman of good understanding, though unimproved by education. She assiduously instilled sentiments of piety into the infant mind of her son; as he often acknowledged with gratitude. When about eight years old, he was sent to the free-school of his native city. Here he was never known to have been corrected for any fault except talking, and diverting other boys from their business. He seems to have learnt by intuition; for though indolence and procrastination were inherent in his constitution, whenever he exerted himself he far excelled every other boy in the school.

Mr. Allen. Much of his superiority over the other boys, was obtained by his memory being peculiarly

retentive. He was, however, conscious, in after life, of the great disadvantages which he experienced from his early indolence, and from his want of regularity in study, whilst at school. Do you recollect the account that has been given of his amusements when a boy?

Frederic. Perfectly. His school-fellows, often receiving assistance from him in their lessons, submitted to his will in almost every thing. Three of the boys generally carried him in a morning to school. One, in the middle, stooped, while he sat upon his back; and one on each side supported him. He never joined with the other boys in their diversions; and his own chief amusement was in the winter, when he took pleasure in being drawn upon the ice, by a boy barefooted, who pulled him along by a garter fastened round his waist.

Sir Charles. One circumstance was remarkable in Johnson, even when a boy at school. I allude to his inviolable regard for truth.

Mr. Allen. On this subject he one day said to a friend, "Accustom your children to a strict attention to truth, even in the most trivial particulars. If, for instance, a thing happen at one window, and they, when relating it, say that it happened at another, do not let it pass, but instantly check them: you do not know where deviation from truth will end."

Lady Irwin. Nothing can be more important, in the education of youth, than to teach them the excellence of veracity. All the vices of which mankind are guilty have had their origin in early life, in a departure from truth.

Edmund. When about nineteen years of age, Johnson was sent to Pembroke College, Oxford; and, when examined previously to admission, the master told him he was the best qualified young man for the university that he had ever known to come there. The death of his father, in distressed circumstances, whilst Johnson was in college, reduced him to difficulties so great that he was compelled to leave the

university without a degree, and to accept of the employment of under-master in a grammar-school, at Market Bosworth, in Leicestershire.

Frederic. This became a very irksome and disagreeable employment to him, in every particular; and in the course of a few months, he was determined to relinquish it.

Edmund. I think that what we next hear of Johnson is his marrying a Mrs. Porter, the widow of a mercer, in Birmingham, with a fortune of about eight hundred pounds. He now set up a private academy near Litchfield, where young gentlemen were to be boarded, and educated in the Greek and Latin languages.

Frederic. He did so; but the project was unsuccessful, for he had only three pupils; the celebrated David Garrick, the actor; his brother, George Garrick, and another person. Mrs. Johnson's fortune was nearly consumed by this speculation, and Johnson himself became greatly embarrassed in his circumstances. His sense of religion, and his strong reliance on Providence, were now, however, a source of the greatest comfort and satisfaction to him.

Mr. Allen. That his mind, at this period, was deeply affected by a sense of religion, is evident from a passage written by him on the seventh of September, 1736. "I have this day entered my twenty-eighth year. Mayest thou, O God, enable me, for Jesus Christ's sake, to spend this in such manner, that I may receive comfort from it at the hour of death, and in the day of judgment. Amen."

Lady Irwin. It is very satisfactory to know that a man whose mind was so powerful as Johnson's, should have had so full a conviction as he had of the truth of Revelation.

Frederic. Although his circumstances appear, at this time, to have been extremely desperate, he determined to go to London. This he did, in company with Garrick.

Sir Charles. And, probably, two such candidates for fame and fortune never, before that day, entered the metropolis together. They brought with them genius, and powers of mind peculiarly formed by nature, for the vocations to which each of them felt himself inclined. They acted from the impulse of young minds, even then meditating future greatness, and, with courage, anticipating success.

Mr. Allen. It is true, that they each proved eminently successful; but the risk, particularly on the part of Johnson, who was a married man, though with no family, was truly alarming. He proposed to earn his subsistence by the hard labour of his pen; chiefly in translating works into English, from the Latin and French languages, and writing for the Gentleman's, and other magazines.

Frederic. Johnson's reception in London, as an author, was not very flattering. Among other persons, he applied to Mr. Wilcox, a bookseller of some eminence, in the Strand; who, after deliberately surveying his robust frame, told him, with a significant look, "Young man, you had better buy a porter's knot!"

Lady Irwin. What, the colossus of literature become a porter, and demean himself by carrying boxes, and hampers, and parcels!

Frederic. Even so; but, after much exertion, for indolent as he naturally was, Johnson was compelled to exert himself, or he must have starved, he attained great celebrity as a writer.

Mr. Allen. But how mortifying a reflection is it, that a man with talents so extraordinary, and learning so great as his, should not have been able, at the age of thirty, to force his way to the favour of the public. *Slow rises worth by poverty depressed.* "He was still," as he says himself, "to provide for the day that was passing over him." One of his chief employments was to write the parliamentary speeches in the Gentleman's Magazine. This he first began to do in

the year 1740; and the eloquence of these speeches is in many instances truly admirable.

Sir Charles. A somewhat singular anecdote has been cited respecting one of them. Johnson was not known to have had any concern in them; and one day, at a dinner, when Mr. Wedderburne (afterwards Lord Loughborough), Dr. Johnson, and Dr. Francis, the translator of Horace, were present, the latter observed, that a particular speech, made by Mr. Pitt (the late Lord Chatham), was the best he had ever read. He added, that "he had himself been employed nearly eight years in the study of Demosthenes, and had finished a translation of that celebrated orator, with all the decorations of style and language within the reach of his capacity; but that he had met with nothing equal to that speech. After having sat for some time silent, Johnson said, "that speech I wrote in a garret in Exeter-street." The company stared at each other in amazement, and Dr. Francis, asked, "How could it have been written by you?"—"Sir," said Johnson, "I wrote it in Exeter-street. I never had been in the gallery of the house of commons in my life except once. Cave (the proprietor of the Gentleman's Magazine), and the persons employed under him, gained admittance. They brought away the subject of discussion, the names of the speakers, the side they took, and the order in which they rose, with notes of the arguments advanced in the course of the debate. The whole was afterwards communicated to me, and I composed the speeches in the form they now have in the parliamentary debates." To this discovery Dr. Francis replied, "Then, sir, you have excelled Demosthenes himself."

Frederic. This is a very singular anecdote: it shows the wonderful facility of Johnson's mind.

Mr. Allen. After struggling with adversity for many years, we at length, in 1747, see announced the design of his great work, the "Dictionary of the English

Language." For the preparation of this work the booksellers entered into an agreement to pay him the sum of fifteen hundred guineas.

Edmund. It must have been a most laborious undertaking.

Mr. Allen. It was so; and, though he had the assistance of several persons to copy for him, it occupied, in the whole, nearly six years. He says, that it was written "not in the soft obscurities of retirement, nor under the shelter of academic bowers, but amidst inconvenience and distraction, in sickness and sorrow, and without the patronage of the great."

Sir Charles. It is indeed to be lamented that no better patronage was afforded to Dr. Johnson, than that of the booksellers. By his own exertions, however, he found that he was now able to provide tolerably well for the support of himself and his wife.

Frederic. Some time after he had been engaged in the Dictionary, he commenced his admirable publication of the "Rambler." This was a periodical work, issued at the rate of two numbers a week; and for each number he received two guineas, besides retaining a right to share in the profits of the work on a republication of it collectedly.

Mr. Allen. Among numerous instances of the piety of Dr. Johnson, there was one connected with the publication of the Rambler. After he had formed a resolution to undertake a work that might be of use to mankind, and an honour to his country, he thought, with Milton, that this was not to be obtained "but by devout prayer to that Eternal Spirit, who can enrich with all utterance, and all knowledge, and send out his seraphim with the hallowed fire of his altar, to touch and purify the lips of whom he pleases." And it was not until he had invoked the especial protection of Heaven, and, by that act of piety, fortified his mind, that he began the work. It did not at first prove very successful, but Dr. Johnson lived to see the publication of a tenth edition of it.

Edmund. The rapidity with which he wrote several papers of the Rambler was peculiarly remarkable. These were composed in haste, as the moment pressed, and, in some instances, he did not even read them over before they were printed.

Mr. Allen. This may have been, and I dare say was true; but it must not be forgotten, that Dr. Johnson never took his pen in hand till he had well weighed the subject respecting which he was about to write; and had grasped, in his comprehensive mind, the sentiments, the train of argument, and general arrangement of the whole.

Sir Charles. It is also deserving of note, that, after the publication of the first edition, Johnson almost re-wrote the whole work; and that he corrected not only the second, but the third edition, to an extent perhaps never before known in the annals of literature; by the introduction of more than six thousand alterations!

Edmund. I should much like to compare the original with the subsequent editions, for the purpose of seeing the nature of these alterations.

Mr. Allen. From the irritability of his constitution, Dr. Johnson had, at all times, an impatience and hurry when he either read or wrote. A certain apprehension, arising from novelty, made him write his first exercise at college twice over; but he never took that trouble with any other composition, and even most of his excellent works were written with peculiarly rapid exertion.

Frederic. His biographer, Mr. Boswell, has stated, that he was known to have written six sheets of a translation from the French in one day, and to have composed forty-eight of the printed octavo pages of the life of Savage at one sitting.

Sir Charles. He did so; but, in the latter instance, it must be remarked that he sat up all night.

Edmund. How laborious, and, on the whole, how little lucrative, appears to be the life of a man who

is compelled to earn his subsistence by the efforts of his pen.

Mr. Allen. It is indeed. Even this great writer found it so; for, a little while after he had completed his Dictionary, he was again in distress. He was arrested for a debt of five pounds eighteen shillings, and was obliged to write to Mr. Richardson, the author of Sir Charles Grandison, to borrow sufficient money to discharge it with. His poverty also compelled him to give up house-keeping, and retire to chambers, in Inner Temple-lane; where, we are told by his biographer, Mr. Murphy, he lived in poverty, total idleness, and the pride of literature.

Lady Irwin. Broken down and dispirited, no doubt, by the miseries of his situation.

Mr. Allen. It has been related, that Johnson's elegant and philosophical, but somewhat gloomy, fiction of "Rasselas," was written for the purpose of obtaining sufficient money to defray the expenses of his mother's funeral, and discharge a few debts which she had unavoidably contracted.

Sir Charles. It gladdens one's heart, however, to know that, not long after this, he was entirely freed from pecuniary embarrassment, by a pension from the crown of three hundred pounds a year. This induced him to leave his chambers, and once more become the master of a house, which he now took in Johnson's-court, Fleet-street.

Frederic. But, sir, before you establish him in his new residence, allow me to state what I recollect concerning Mr. Boswell's account of Dr. Johnson's library, which was in two garrets, over his chambers in the Temple. He says, he there saw a great number of books, but all very dusty and in great confusion. The floor was strewed with manuscript leaves, in Johnson's hand-writing. There was also an apparatus for chemical experiments, to which the doctor had, all his life, been very partial. The place seemed favourable for retire-

ment; and, when he wanted to study without interruption, he went up thither, and did not even mention it to his servant.

Lady Irwin. I should much like to have seen this extraordinary man.

Sir Charles. His personal appearance was very rude and uncouth. When young he is described to have been lean and lank, so that his immense structure of bones was hideously striking to the eye; and the scars of the scrofula, a disease with which he was much afflicted, were deeply visible. At this period he wore his own hair, which was straight and stiff, and separated behind; and he often had seemingly convulsive starts and odd gesticulations: but his conversation was so interesting that all these defects were forgotten. His disorder was thought, by some persons, to have been of the nature of that denominated St. Vitus's dance, others imagined it to have originated in habit. It, however, gave him so unpleasant an appearance, that he was often mistaken by strangers for an idiot.

Frederic. A little girl, surprised by his extraordinary motions, one day said to him, "Pray, Dr. Johnson, why do you make such strange gestures?" He good-naturedly replied, "From bad habit; and do you, my dear, take care to guard against bad habits."

Sir Charles. We are told that, in after life, while talking or musing, as he sat in his chair, he commonly held his head to one side, towards his right shoulder, and shook it in a tremulous manner; moving, at the same time, his body backward and forward, and rubbing his left knee, in the same direction, with the palm of his hand. In the intervals of articulating he made various sounds with his mouth, sometimes as if ruminating, or what is called chewing the cud, sometimes giving a half-whistle, sometimes making his tongue to play backward from the roof of his mouth, as if clucking like a hen, and sometimes protruding it against his upper gums in front; generally, when he had concluded

a period in the course of a dispute, by which time he was a good deal exhausted through violence and vociferation, he used to blow with his breath like a whale. This is supposed to have been a relief to his lungs, though it seemed a contemptuous mode of expression, as if he had wholly defeated the arguments of his oponents.

Lady Irwin. I recollect to have read, that once, to show his politeness to a French lady, Madame de Boufflers, who went to see him at his chambers in the Temple, he attended her to her carriage, though dressed in a rusty brown coat, a pair of old shoes by way of slippers, a little shrivelled wig, sticking on the top of his head, and the sleeves of his shirt, and the knees of his breeches, hanging loose.

Edmund. The account goes on to state, that a considerable crowd of people had gathered round her carriage, which had been stationed in Fleet-street, and were not a little surprised by his singular appearance.

Lady Irwin. Dr. Johnson was not always a very polite man in company. Even his biographer, Mr. Boswell, states many instances of what appear to have been direct rudenesses.

Mr. Allen. It is very true, that with the exteriors of politeness he was not much acquainted. The melancholy which had long been habitual in his constitution, had an effect on his temper, and rendered him extremely impetuous and irritable. He had also great pride of science, and a fierce independent spirit, which inflamed him on some occasions beyond all bounds of moderation.

Sir Charles. And yet he must have been a most interesting companion; for he had a mind stored with a vast and various collection of learning and knowledge. This he communicated with peculiar perspicuity and force, in rich and choice expression. He united a logical head with a fertile imagination, which gave him an extraordinary advantage in arguing. No man thought more profoundly, or with more acute discernment. A fallacy could not stand before him;

it was sure to be refuted by strength of reasoning, and by a precision, both in idea and expression, that were almost unequalled.

Frederic. But it is said that he often chose the weaker side, and argued, not in favour of what he knew to be the truth, but merely for victory.

Sir Charles. This was certainly one of his failings. We are even told that a gentleman once thanked Dr. Rose of Chiswick, for having introduced him to Dr. Johnson, as he had been convinced by him, in the course of a long dispute, that an opinion which he had formerly embraced as a settled truth, was only a vulgar error. "Nay," said Johnson, on this being mentioned to him, "do not let your friend be thankful, for he was right, and I was wrong."

But we are wandering somewhat too far from his history. It is time we should revert to it.

Frederic. If you please. Shortly after the circumstances of Johnson had been rendered independent by his pension, he endeavoured to enlarge his circle of literary acquaintance. This he did by founding a club, which was afterwards named the "Literary club;" and which originally met at the Turk's Head tavern, in Gerrard-street, every Tuesday evening.

Sir Charles. In the year 1766, the constitution of Johnson seemed to be in a rapid decline; and a morbid melancholy, which often clouded his understanding, came upon him with a deeper gloom than ever.

Mr. Allen. In this situation, Mr. and Mrs. Thrale paid him a visit, and found him on his knees, with the Rev. Dr. Delap, beseeching God to continue to him the use of his understanding. Mr. Thrale kindly took him to his house at Streatham; and Johnson thenceforward became a constant resident in that family. An apartment was fitted up expressly for him, and the library was greatly enlarged. Whatever could be devised to promote his happiness, and establish his health, was studiously performed from that time, till the death of Mr. Thrale.

Edmund. We are told that the fame of Johnson had excited the curiosity of the king. His majesty expressed a desire to see him; and, accordingly, the librarian at Buckingham House, invited Johnson to inspect that elegant collection of books; at the same time, giving him a hint of what was intended. The king entered the room; and, among other things, asked Dr. Johnson, "if he meant to give the world any more of his compositions?" Johnson answered, "That he thought he had written enough."—"And I should think so too," (replied his majesty) "if you had not written so well."

Mr. Allen. The remaining occurrences of his life may be related in few words. In the month of June, 1783, he had a paralytic stroke. This was after the death of his friend, Mr. Thrale; and when he resided at a house in Bolt-court, Fleet-street. In the winter of the same year, he was swelled, from head to foot with a dropsy; and it was evident that the period of his dissolution could not be far distant.

Lady Irwin. Had he not a great fear of death?

Mr. Allen. It is related that he had. Through his whole life he exhibited a fervent and unremitting piety, and at the same time great purity of heart; but, clouded as he was by melancholy, his religion also assumed a melancholy cast. This caused him, in several instances, towards the close of his life, to declare that the prospect of death was terrible. But at length the strength of religion entirely prevailed against the infirmity of nature; and his foreboding dread of the Divine Justice, subsided into a pious trust, and humble hope of mercy at the Throne of Grace.

Frederic. Mr. Nichols, the highly respectable editor of the Gentleman's Magazine, has related some interesting circumstances relative to Dr. Johnson, which occurred in his presence. Whilst confined by his last illness, (he says) it was the regular practice of Dr. Johnson, to have the church service read to him,

by some attentive and friendly divine. The Rev. John Hoole performed this kind office, in the presence of Mr. Nichols, for the last time. By Dr. Johnson's desire, no more than the Litany was read; and, in this, his responses were made in a deep and sonorous voice, and with the most profound devotion that can be imagined. His hearing not being quite perfect, he more than once interrupted Mr. Hoole with, "Louder, my dear sir, louder, I entreat you, or you pray in vain!" When the service was ended, he, with great earnestness, turned to the mother of Mr. Hoole, who also was present, and said, "I thank you, madam, very heartily, for your kindness in joining me in this solemn exercise. Live well, I conjure you; and you will not feel the compunction at last, which I now feel."

Mr. Allen. So truly humble were the thoughts which this great and good man entertained of his own approaches to perfection. Every hour, that could be abstracted from his bodily pains and infirmities, was spent in prayer, and in the warmest ejaculations; and, in that pious, praise-worthy, and exemplary manner, he closed a life, begun, continued, and ended in virtue.

Frederic. Not long after this, on the thirteenth of December, 1785, and in the seventy-fifth year of his age, Dr. Johnson closed his mortal career; and his remains were interred in Westminster Abbey. He left a few legacies; but the chief of his property, amounting to about fifteen hundred pounds, he bequeathed to Francis Barber, a faithful black servant, who had long lived in his service.

Sir Charles. The character of Dr. Johnson need not occupy our further attention; and we have already spoken of his works, the Rambler, Idler, Dictionary, and Rasselas. Besides these, he wrote several political pamphlets in favour of the government, a "Journey to the Hebrides, or Western Islands of Scotland."—

Frederic. Which h s been considered a model for

such persons as shall hereafter relate their travels, as far as regards the important subjects of men, manners, modes of life, and the progress of civilization.

Sir Charles. He likewise wrote several sermons, which he gave to his friend, the Rev. Dr. John Taylor; and which were left at his death for publication: and some poetry, both Latin and English. But the most popular of all Dr. Johnson's writings, were his "Lives of the Poets." It is true that much fault has been found with his criticisms: in particular, it is said, that justice has not been done to Swift; that Gay, and Prior, are undervalued; and Gray, harshly treated. This charge cannot perhaps be disputed; yet, with all the defects they have been alleged to exhibit, they are indisputably the most masterly productions of the kind which our language can boast. His works have been published together, in twelve volumes in octavo, edited by Mr. Murphy.

As a means of somewhat varying the discussions, and at the same time to employ the young gentlemen in composition, it was proposed by Mr. Allen, that, for the two ensuing evenings, the subjects for discussion should be turned into exercises; and that, in these, Frederic should have the precedence. On being asked what lives they would fix upon, Frederic chose that of Sir William Jones; and Edmund, the life of Mr. Cumberland, the late dramatic writer.

TWENTY-SIXTH EVENING.

Frederic Montagu's Exercise.

THE party assembled at the usual hour. Frederic produced his exercise, and Sir Charles Irwin requested him to read it. He rose, and thus began:

"I have selected as the subject of my exercise, the memoirs of SIR WILLIAM JONES, one of the most

amiable men, and accomplished scholars, of his time. I am fully aware of my inability to do justice to his character, even with the advantages which I possess of having before me, several excellent memoirs of him; particularly that by his biographer and friend, Lord Teignmouth. I hope, therefore, for the partiality of friends, to excuse such defects as may appear in the efforts I have made.

"Sir William Jones was the only son of William Jones, Esq. an eminent mathematician, who resided in the island of Anglesea, North Wales; but he was born in London, in the year 1746. His father did not long survive his birth; and the care of his early years devolved upon his mother, whose talents and virtues eminently qualified her for so important a task. In the education of her son, she appears to have preferred a method at once affectionate and judicious. Discovering in him a curiosity, and a thirst for knowledge, beyond what children generally display, she made the gratification of these to depend upon his own industry. To his incessant importunities for information, on casual topics, which she watchfully stimulated, she always replied, "Read, and you will know;" a maxim to the observance of which he invariably acknowledged himself indebted for his subsequent attainments. Her success was adequate to her efforts. In his fourth year, her pupil was able to read distinctly and rapidly any English book. She particularly attended to the cultivation of his memory, by making him repeat some of the popular passages of Shakspeare, and some of the best of Gay's Fables.

"As soon as he had completed his seventh year, he was sent to the school at Harrow, then under the care of Dr. Thackeray. Here he applied with diligence to his prescribed tasks, but without indicating that superiority of talent which might have been expected from a person who afterwards rendered himself so eminent. During the vacations, his mother assiduously resumed her part of the task; and, among other acquirements,

he attained under her superintendence, the art of drawing, in which she excelled.

"When at school he broke one of his thighs, and was obliged to be taken home for twelve months. The consequence was, that the course of his education was considerably interrupted; and, on his return to school, the greatest and most painful efforts were necessary to recover what he had lost. During a few months, however, he applied so closely, even in his leisure hours, that he again reached the head of his class, and gained every prize that was offered for the best exercise. He often amused himself with translating the writings of the Greek and Latin poets into English verse. So surprising were the powers of his memory, that he had no difficulty in recollecting almost every thing he had read. It has been stated that, on one occasion, his schoolfellows had proposed to act the play of the "Tempest;" but that, having no copy at hand, he wrote it for them so correctly from memory, that they acted with as much reputation as they probably could have derived from the best edition. Whilst he was at school, he wrote a dramatic piece, on the story of Meleager, which was acted by his schoolfellows as a tragedy: some lines of this drama have been printed; which, as of juvenile composition, have great merit.

"In the usual recreations of the boys at Harrow, Jones was not often a partaker; for the hours which were allotted for play, he generally devoted to improvement.

"An anecdote has been recorded at this period which strongly indicates the turn of his mind, and the impression which had been made upon it by his studies. He invented a political game, in which Dr. Bennet, subsequently Bishop of Cloyne, and the afterwards celebrated Grecian, Dr. Parr, were his principal associates. They divided the fields near Harrow according to the map of Greece, into states and kingdoms. Each

fixed upon one of these as his dominion, and assumed an ancient name. Some of the boys consented to be styled barbarians. They were to invade the territories of the others, and attack their hillocks, which were denominated fortresses. The chiefs vigorously defended their respective domains against the incursions of the enemy; and, in these imitative wars, the young statesmen held councils, made vehement harangues, and composed memorials; all perhaps very boyish, but calculated to fill their minds with ideas of legislation and government. In these amusements, Jones was invariably the leader.

"It was customary with Dr. Thackeray, the master of Harrow school, who retired from the superintendence of it, when Jones was in his fifteenth year, never to applaud even the best compositions of his scholars; from a notion that praise only tended to make them vain or idle. But the opinion which he gave, in private, to the friends of Jones was, that "he was a boy of so active a mind, that if he were left naked and friendless on Salisbury plain, he would, nevertheless, find the road to fame and riches."

"His name was long afterwards remembered at Harrow, with the respect that was due to his superior talents and erudition. He was frequently quoted by the master who followed Dr. Thackeray, as the ornament of the school, and an example for imitation to all the remaining boys. During the time he was there, he not only distinguished himself by the extent of his classical attainments, and his poetical compositions, but by the eloquence of his declamations, and the masterly manner in which they were delivered.

"From Harrow he was sent, in his sixteenth year, to University College, Oxford. It was here that he began to indulge that passion for Oriental literature, in which he afterwards attained so much eminence. He acquired a perfect knowledge of the Hebrew, Arabic, and Persic languages; and, in his ardent thirst for

learning, studied with so little intermission, from either sleep or exercise, as considerably to injure both his sight and his health.

"The income of his mother was very small. As soon, therefore, as his education was completed, he was induced to accept the situation of tutor to Viscount Althorpe, (now Earl Spencer) that he might relieve her from the expense of his support. His own income was afterwards increased, by being elected a fellow of his college.

"Whilst he was resident with the Spencer family, Mr. Jones was induced, by desire of the King of Denmark, to translate the life of Nadir Shah from an Eastern manuscript into the French language. He also wrote a Persian grammar, and began to prepare a dictionary of the Persian language, in which the principal words were illustrated from the most celebrated Eastern authors. But the latter work was not completed, on account of the expense with which its compilation was attended.

"It appears that Mr. Jones had entertained some doubts relative to the evidences of the Christian religion. The consequence was, a serious and attentive inquiry into the grounds of faith; and the result, as the result always must be with an impartial mind, was a firm belief in the authenticity and inspiration of the Holy Scriptures.

"As a profession, which he was in future to pursue, Mr. Jones, about this time, began to study the law. Yet, as a relaxation for his leisure hours, he wrote several poems, which he printed in a small volume. He translated the life of Nadir Shah into English, and published some "Commentaries on Asiatic Poetry;" which he finished when only in his twenty-third year. In 1774, he was called to the bar; and, having remarked that the law was a science, which would admit of no participation with the Eastern muses, he, for some years, renounced them, with the most virtuous and determined inflexibility. Those

persons who consider the study of the law incompatible with a mind devoted to the acquisition of polite literature, would imagine that Mr. Jones had to encounter almost insuperable difficulties. This, however, was not the case. He found in it nothing so dry or so laborious as not to be overcome by the same industry which had enabled him to vanquish, even in childhood, the difficulties that frequently deter men of mature years. He was stimulated by what appears to have predominated with him through life, an honest ambition to rise to eminence in his profession.

"In the month of March, 1783, he was appointed a judge of the supreme court of judicature at Fort William, in Bengal; a situation to which he had long anxiously looked forward. On this occasion he received the honour of knighthood: shortly afterwards he was married to the eldest daughter of Dr. Shipley, Bishop of St. Asaph; and, in the same month, left his native country, to which he never returned.

"He arrived at Calcutta in September, and was eagerly welcomed by all those who were interested in the acquisition of a magistrate of probity and independence; of a scholar, who was professedly at the head of Oriental literature, and one, in the prime and vigour of life, who bade fair to be long the ornament of the British dominions in India. Sir William Jones had not been long in his new situation before he began to divide his time into such stated portions, that no objects, connected with duty or science, could interfere with each other. One of his first endeavours was, to institute at Calcutta, a society, afterwards denominated the Asiatic Literary Institution, the members of which might aid him in those scientific pursuits, which he foresaw would become infinitely too numerous, and too extended, for his individual labour. Of this society he was, unanimously, elected the president.

"His whole time was now divided between the laborious duties of his public situation, and the extension of Oriental knowledge; and to these he attended

with so ardent an application, as to prove seriously injurious to his health. He now arranged the scheme of a great national work, a "Digest of Hindu and Mahommedan Law," to be compiled by the most learned native lawyers of India, and to be accompanied by a literal version into English; and under the approbation of the Marquis of Cornwallis, then the governor-general, he undertook the amazing labour of superintendence and translation. "This work (he has himself said) he considered a preliminary to the security which he hoped to see established among our Asiatic subjects."

"After some time, Lady Jones, finding herself unable to endure the climate of India, was obliged to return to England. This she did in December, 1793. Sir William himself, proposed to set out in the course of a year and half, or two years, afterwards; being anxiously desirous of previously completing the system of Indian laws, the arrangement of which he had begun. Lady Jones had not been four months on her voyage, when Sir William was seized with an inflammation in the liver, a complaint common in Bengal; which terminated fatally, a week afterwards, on the twenty-seventh of April, 1794. On the morning of that day, his attendants, alarmed at the evident symptoms of approaching dissolution, sent for his friend, Lord Teignmouth. His lordship found him lying on the bed, in a posture of meditation, the only symptom of remaining life being a small degree of motion in the heart; which, after a few seconds, ceased; and he expired without a pang or groan. His bodily suffering, from the complacency of his features, and the ease of his attitude, could not have been severe; and his mind must have derived consolation from those sources, whence he had been in the habit of seeking it, and whence alone, in our last moments, it can ever be found."

Lady Irwin. I thank you, Frederic, for your account of one of the most amiable, upright, and learned of men.

Sir Charles. As a son, a husband, a friend, and a citizen, Sir William Jones fulfilled every duty in an exemplary manner. His erudition has been displayed in his various literary labours; and scarcely any subject of human research escaped his notice. As a linguist, he has seldom been equalled: his list of languages comprehends eight studied critically; eight studied less perfectly, but all intelligible with a dictionary; and twelve studied less perfectly, but all attainable. As a poet he would, probably, have risen to the first class, had his ardour for transplanting foreign beauties allowed him leisure for the exercise of his own invention.

Mr. Allen. But there is another trait in the character of Sir William Jones, and of more importance than all the rest. He was a sincere Christian. Of his religious opinions, the following note written in his Bible, is a pleasing testimony: "I have carefully and regularly perused these Holy Scriptures; and am of opinion that the volume, independently of its divine origin, contains more sublimity, purer morality, more important history, and finer strains of eloquence, than can be collected from all other books, in whatever language they may have been written."

Sir Charles. When we recollect how large a portion of the time and study of Sir William Jones, was applied to the acquirement of a knowledge of ancient history, and the habits and customs of eastern nations, we cannot but feel great satisfaction when we read his observations that, all his historical researches tended to confirm the Mosaic accounts of the primitive world; and he says, "Our testimony," (he writes in the name of the Asiatic Society) "on that subject ought to have the greater weight; because, if the result of our observations had been totally different, we should, nevertheless, have published them: not indeed with equal pleasure, but with equal confidence; for *truth is mighty*, and, whatsoever be its consequences, must always *prevail*."

TWENTY-SEVENTH EVENING.

Edmund Irwin's Exercise.

"The Author of the "West Indian," the "Wheel of Fortune," the "Jew," and several other comedies, was Richard Cumberland, the son of a clergyman, who had a living in Northamptonshire. His mother was a daughter of Dr. Bentley, the learned master of Trinity College, Cambridge; and he was himself born in the master's lodge of that college, in the year 1732.

"When a child, he appeared to most persons to be dull of intellect. His mother, and his grandfather, were very strict with him, because they thought him capable of greater exertions than he chose to make. As soon as he had completed his sixth year, he was sent to school at Bury St. Edmund's. Here he was so careless, that he soon got to the very bottom of his class. But his idleness did not continue long. His master one day called him to his chair at the head of the school, and lectured him publicly, and very sharply; the attention of all the boys being fixed upon him. Among other observations, the master asked him what report he could expect to be made of him to his grandfather Bentley; whom Richard both loved and revered. He made no defence, but returned with shame to his seat, which was the lowest in the class, and that class the lowest but one in the school. He hid his face between his hands, resting his head on the desk before him, and cried bitterly. When he raised his eyes and looked round him, he thought he saw contempt in the countenances of all the boys. He resolved to be more studious for the future, and now took all the pains that his age would admit of, to regain his lost ground. His diligence was followed by success; and success encouraged him to fresh exertions. From this time, his task, instead of appearing a labour, was his delight. His natural faculties, which

were good, began to unfold themselves. He rose rapidly to the head of his class; and the whole time he was in the upper school, he never once lost his place. Before he was thirteen years old, he was at the head of the school, was a good Greek and Latin scholar, and had even written several short English poems.

His father now sent him to Westminster school, the master of which gave him great commendation for the excellent manner in which he passed his examination; and placed him in one of the higher classes. Here he advanced rapidly in classical knowledge, and particularly in composition. But he was guilty of several blameable actions. Amongst others, he, on one occasion, left the Abbey, in the time of divine service, and joined several boys, for the purpose of insulting a congregation of Quakers at their devotions; and he once imposed upon the master an exercise in Latin verse, which he had entirely stolen from a printed book. The master, after commending him for his composition, read the verses aloud to the senior boys, and was proceeding to renew his praise, when, stung with remorse for the disgraceful action, Cumberland honestly confessed he had stolen every syllable of it, and humbly entreated for pardon. The master paused a few moments, and replied, "Child, I forgive you. Go to your seat, and say nothing of the matter. You have gained more credit with me by your honest confession, than you could have got by the verses, had they been your own." Next morning, to make all the amends he was able, Cumberland took great pains in the composition of another exercise, and gave it in unasked for. He also took care to tell the boys, who had heard him so unjustly commended, that he very sincerely repented of the deception he had practised.

"When only in his fourteenth year, he was admitted at Trinity College, Cambridge. Here, though left almost wholly to his own direction, he led a regular and studious life. He read the works of poets, histo-

rians, philosophers, in short, nearly every thing that came in his way, with indiscriminating avidity; but he almost wholly neglected those subjects which would be most important to him at the examination on taking his degree. This was the case during his two first years. In his third year, Dr. Smith, then the master of the college, recommended that he should lose no time in preparing for this examination; and he set about the work with so much diligence, as, in a great degree, to endanger his health. He allowed himself only six hours sleep, and lived chiefly on milk. He now gave his almost exclusive attention to the study of Euclid, mathematics, hydrostatics, optics, and astronomy, and those other branches of physical science, a knowledge of which were requisite for the purpose he had in view. In consequence of this close application, late as he began, he attained a distinguished rank among the honours of the university.

"As soon as he had taken his degree, his views were directed towards the clerical profession, to which he was led by his own natural disposition, as well as by the example of several of his ancestors. These, however, were frustrated, by an offer from Lord Halifax, then President of the Board of Trade, to make him his private secretary. The situation was too flattering to be refused; though, long before the end of his career, he looked back with regret on the choice he had made. His friends now anticipated for him nothing but prosperity and eminence. He soon, however, began to feel that his situation was far from an independent one; and, though it was such as to afford him ample leisure for literary pursuits, it was by no means suited to the natural turn of his disposition. Under such feelings, it was only by the persuasion of friends that he could be induced to continue in it. During his leisure hours he read and wrote incessantly; and, as he has stated, lived in all the temperance, and nearly all the retirement of a hermit.

"Lord Halifax resigned his situation at the Board

of Trade, and Mr. Cumberland, through the interest of that nobleman, obtained a small establishment, as crown agent for the province of Nova Scotia. Shortly after this, he married a Miss Ridge, of Kilmiston, in Hampshire, a young lady of great worth and beauty, with whom he lived affectionately and happily.

"On the accession of his present majesty to the throne, Lord Halifax was appointed Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, and Mr. Cumberland accompanied him to that country, as one of his secretaries. His residence was in Dublin castle: but he soon found that this situation was neither a pleasant nor a profitable one. Whilst in Dublin, he had the offer of a baronetcy. This he had the fortitude to refuse, and had reason to think that this refusal contributed to weaken his interest with Lord Halifax. Some time afterwards, when his lordship was appointed one of the Secretaries of State, the only situation which Mr. Cumberland could obtain, was that of Clerk of Reports of the Board of Excise; and even this was given to him through the interest of Lord Hillsborough. He was, however, subsequently promoted to the office of Secretary to the Board of Trade.

"Mr. Cumberland, about this time, wrote an opera called the "Summer's Tale," and two comedies, the "Brothers," and the "West Indian." His comedies, particularly the latter, were acted with great success. He afterwards wrote several other comedies, and some tragedies.

"An event occurred about this time, which proved his disinterested generosity, and high sense of honour. An old clergyman, whose name was Reynolds, a first cousin of his father, and not personally known to Mr. Cumberland, had made his will, and by it, had bequeathed to him nearly his whole property. He came to London, and, introducing himself, begged Mr. Cumberland would accompany him to a conveyancer, that a deed of gift might be made to him of this property. After the clergyman had explained his reasons for

so doing, Mr. Cumberland assented; but positively required, that a clause should be inserted in the deed, enabling Mr. Reynolds to revoke it whenever he might think proper to do so. This clause was inserted, and about ten years afterwards, the revocation actually took place: a nephew of Mr. Reynolds brought his order for delivering up the conveyance, and this was done without the slightest hesitation.

"In the year 1780, Mr. Cumberland was employed on a confidential mission to negociate a peace with the court of Madrid. This engagement, though in itself highly honourable, laid the foundation of all his future distresses, and seems to have embittered almost every remaining hour of his life. The project failed; and he, by no means, received that treatment from his employers, to which he appears to have been entitled. The promises made to him before he set out, he has stated, were not fulfilled. His bills upon his bankers were refused payment by the treasury. In consequence of this he was arrested at Bayonne on his way home, whilst labouring under the violence of a fever. He had contracted a debt of nearly five thousand pounds, in the service of his country, and was under the necessity of selling every acre of his hereditary estate to pay it. All the applications that he made for remuneration and redress, were received with coldness, and treated with neglect.

"Mr. Cumberland, not long afterwards, retired from the public service, on a diminished income. Reduced, by these afflicting events, into straitened circumstances, he put his family on a corresponding establishment, and went to reside at Tunbridge Wells. Here he devoted his time, as formerly, to his books and his pen. He published a work in two volumes, entitled, "Anecdotes of Eminent Painters in Spain;" and, sometime afterwards, the "Observer," a collection of original essays on various topics, favourable to religion, morals, and literature. It would occupy too much of the present time to speak of all his literary

productions, which were of very various description. As many as thirty-five dramatic pieces have been enumerated; two epic poems; three novels; a tract on divinity, entitled, "A few plain Reasons for Believing in the Evidences of the Christian Religion;" and "Memoirs of his own Life."

"Towards the latter part of his life, Mr. Cumberland sustained a great variety of afflictions. The loss of his wife, the bad health of his favourite daughter, the failure of his literary pursuits, and the consequent pecuniary difficulties with which he had to struggle—all these bore heavily on his mind, and occasioned many a pang. Yet he sustained his afflictions with patience, and was often cheerful amidst them all. For many years previously to his decease, he was in the habit of composing an appropriate prayer of thanksgiving for the last day in the year, and of supplication for the first day of the succeeding year. He survived to an old age, and died, after a sudden and short illness, on the seventh of May, 1811, and in his eightieth year.

"It was Mr. Cumberland's misfortune to have been bred a courtier, whilst he possessed abilities which ill adapted him for political pursuits. When in a subordinate station, and his duties were definite and formal, he duly performed them; but, when he had to assume the character of a minister, he seems to have failed; and the consequence was, neglect on the part of his employers, and embarrassment to himself."

POETS.

TWENTY-EIGHTH EVENING.

Miss Irwin had returned from a visit in the neighbourhood of London; and, this evening, for the first time, had an opportunity, which, in consequence of her brother's numerous letters on the subject, she had long desired, of being admitted to join in the biographical discussions.

On the life of Shakspeare being proposed, Mr. Allen considered the opportunity a good one for him to introduce a short account of the origin and the nature of poetry. He adopted the definition of Blair, that poetry was "the language of passion, or of enlivened imagination, formed, most commonly, into regular number," though, he stated, that such numbers were not absolutely necessary to it. He spoke of its antiquity; remarked that music and poetry are generally believed to have had the same origin, and to have been prompted by the same occasions; and that the first poets sang their own verses, whence he deduced the origin of versification. He briefly detailed the history of poetry among the ancients; particularly dwelt upon that of the Holy Scriptures, and directed the notice of the young persons to numerous poetical beauties in the Old Testament, particularly in the Psalms, and the books of Job and Isaiah. After this he spoke of the poetry of the Greeks and Romans, and, apologizing for his digression, passed to that of our own country. He described its origin and progress, from the earliest periods of English literature to the present, and cited numerous examples in illustration of the different kinds.

Pastoral poetry, or such as was employed in the celebration of rural scenes and objects, he described as the most simple and natural of any; but he combated the notion of some writers that it was, on this account, to be considered the earliest form of poetical composition. The first poetry, he said, was doubtless inspired by events and objects of unusual occurrence, such as roused the passions of men, or at least awakened their wonder and admiration. Of this description he considered the actions and the achievements of their heroes, their own exploits in war, the successes or misfortunes of their countrymen and friends. These he conceived had furnished the first themes to the bards of every country.

He next mentioned *Lyric poetry*, or such as, by the various measure of versification, was adapted to accompanyment with a lyre or other musical instrument; and remarked, that this was probably the form under which at least, many of the ancient bards poured forth their enthusiastic strains. Of *Descriptive poetry*, he observed, that as its great merit consists in the excellence of picturesque description, and as a delineation of natural objects comes within the reach of every one's abilities, so this species of poetry is frequently attempted by second-rate geniuses. He spoke of Thomson's Seasons, as a descriptive poem, but one of great merit, and pointed out several passages in it of peculiar excellence. *Didactic poetry* he defined to be such as is intended to convey knowledge and instruction; and remarked, that it differed only in form, and not in scope and substance, from a philosophical, moral, or critical treatise in prose. Of this kind he instanced the poem of Lucretius on the Nature of Things, the Georgics of Virgil, and Pope's Essay on Criticism. He next adverted to *Epic poetry*, or a recital of illustrious enterprises, in a poetical form; stated, that of all the species of poetry, it was the most dignified, and, at the same time, the most difficult of execution. The instances of this which he described and illustrated were, the Iliad of Homer, the Æneid of Virgil, and Telemachus.

The last kind that remained to be mentioned was *Dramatic poetry*, which, he reminded them, was so called from a Greek word, signifying to act; because, in this, the action is not recited, as in epic poetry, but is itself shown in those by whom it is represented. Mr. Allen then reverted to SHAKSPEARE, as indisputably at the head of the English dramatic poets. He said, that when we consider the period in which Shakspeare flourished, his having been born as early as the year 1564, and the disadvantages under which he laboured, he must certainly have been one of the most extraordinary men which this country ever produced.

Miss Irwin was desirous of knowing something respecting the parentage of Shakspeare. Frederic replied, that his father had been a dealer in wool, at Stratford-upon-Avon, in Warwickshire, where this son William, our dramatic poet, and nine other children were born.

Louisa. Where was he educated, Edmund?

Frederic. He was sent to the free-school at Stratford. Here he acquired a smattering of Latin; but he was soon taken away, to be employed in his father's business. This of course deprived him of all further advantage from scholastic instruction; and, as he intended to settle in that business, he married when little more than eighteen years of age. His wife was Anne Hathaway, the daughter of a substantial yeoman, who lived near Stratford.

Mr. Allen. In almost every instance, particularly among the middle and lower classes of mankind, such early marriages are very injurious. At a time when the individuals married are scarcely able to conduct themselves without guidance, they have, in such case, to superintend and conduct the affairs of a family. This also often becomes a burden, that weighs them down, and overcomes their best exertions.

Frederic. Of the domestic economy of Shakspeare, or even the mode of his subsistence, we have no infor-

mation; but it would seem that both were in a considerable degree neglected, by his falling into bad company.

Edmund. He associated with a gang of deer-stealers.

Sir Charles. And, as nearly all depredators sooner or later are, was detected and disgraced. He was caught in the act of robbing the park of Sir Thomas Lucy, of Charlecot, near Stratford, but contrived to make his escape, leave his family and his business, and seek for shelter in London.

Louisa. How old was he then, sir?

Sir Charles. About twenty-two.

Edmund. By means, no doubt, of his countryman, Thomas Green, who, at this time, was a celebrated comedian, Shakspeare was introduced to the play-house, where, it is said, his necessities compelled him to accept of the office of call-boy, or prompter's attendant.

Louisa. Was this at Drury-lane, or Covent-garden?

Edmund. At neither, sister, but at a house called the Globe, by the Bank-side, in Southwark. Neither the Drury-lane nor the Covent-garden theatres were then in existence.

Sir Charles. It must be remarked, that plays were, at this time, performed in the afternoon, not in the evening, as at present: that coaches were then very little in use; and that those persons who were too proud, too tender, or too idle to walk, rode on horse-back to any distant business or diversion. Many, consequently, went on horseback to the play.

Frederic. And there were persons always in waiting to hold their horses. It is said that, when Shakspeare went to London, one of his first expedients for support, was to hold horses at the play-house. In this office he became so conspicuous, for his care and readiness, that, in a short time, almost every man, as he alighted, called for Will Shakspeare; and scarcely any other waiter was trusted with a horse, while he could

be had. Shakspeare, finding more horses put into his hands than he could hold, hired boys to wait under his inspection, who, when he was summoned, were immediately to present themselves, and say, ",I am Shakspeare's boy, sir." And, as long as the practice of riding to the playhouse continued, the waiters, who held the horses, retained the appellation of "Shakspeare's boys."

Mr. Allen. This story was first related by Pope; and was communicated to him by Mr. Rowe, who did not think it deserving of a place in the life of Shakspeare that he wrote. And the inquiries of subsequent writers have caused it, I think, to be generally rejected. Whether, however, Shakspeare was thus employed on the outside of the theatre or not, it is certain, that, after a little while, he obtained employment as an actor within.

Frederic. He did sir; but this is said to have been at first in a very inferior line. The character in which he appeared to greatest advantage was that of the Ghost, in his own tragedy of "Hamlet."

Edmund. It was not as an actor that he distinguished himself; but no one will deny his merit as a dramatic writer. We are even told that Queen Elizabeth was so much delighted with his plays, that she had several of them acted before her; that the Earl of Southampton presented him with a purse containing a thousand guineas; and that King James the First wrote him a complimentary letter in his own hand.

Mr. Allen. All these circumstances prove how highly our admirable dramatist was esteemed even during his life.

Edmund. In the course of a few years, he acquired considerable property, and obtained a share in the theatre. His whole annual income is supposed to have been now equal to a thousand or twelve hundred pounds of present money. He at length retired from the stage; and having purchased a house at Stratford, chiefly resided there during the remainder of his days.

Frederic. The habits of life of Shakspeare were now very different from those of his youth. He was peculiarly esteemed for his gentle and amiable disposition, his great flow of wit, and as a most agreeable companion.

Mr. Allen. It is to be lamented that so few anecdotes should have been recorded of him. The various incidents in the life of a man who commenced the world so ill; who laboured under so many disadvantages; by his talents raised himself to such eminence, and at last rendered himself so estimable, both in public and in private life, as Shakspeare did; must, if properly recorded, have been both amusing and instructive.

Edmund. He died on his birth-day, the twenty-third of April, 1616, when he had completed his fifty-second year; and was buried on the north side of the chancel of the great church at Stratford.

About a hundred and twenty years after his death, a noble monument was erected to his memory in Westminster Abbey.

Sir Charles. Dr. Johnson has given to the world an admirable essay on the merits of his writings.

Edmund. I think I can recollect some of the principal points of it. He says, that Shakspeare was, above all writers, the poet of nature; the poet, that holds out to his readers a faithful mirror of manners and of life. He had no example before him of sufficient fame, to force him on imitation. He therefore indulged his natural disposition; and this disposition led him to comedy. In tragedy he often writes with great appearance of toil and study; but, in his comic scenes, he seems to produce without labour, what no labour can improve. In tragedy he is always struggling after some occasion to be comic; but in comedy he seems to repose, or to luxuriate, as in a mode of thinking congenial to his nature. In his tragic scenes there is always something wanting; but his comedy often surpasses expectation or desire. His comedy pleases by

the thoughts and the language; and his tragedy chiefly by incident and action. His tragedy seems to be skill; his comedy to be instinct. There is one great defect in the writings of Shakspeare: he is always ready to sacrifice virtue to convenience; and is so much more careful to please than to instruct, that he seems to write without any moral purpose. He makes no just distribution of good or evil, nor is always careful to show in the virtuous a disapprobation of the wicked. He carries his persons indifferently through right and wrong; and at the end dismisses them without further care, and leaves their examples to operate by chance. There is also, in many parts, a coarseness of sentiment and language, which are utterly repugnant to any notions of delicacy. The plots of his plays are often carelessly formed. He has little regard to the distinction of time or place; but gives to one age or nation, without scruple, the customs, institutions, and opinions of another, at the expense not only of likelihood, but of possibility. A quibble is to Shakspeare, what a luminous vapour is to a traveller. He follows it at all adventures; it is sure to lead him out of his way, and sure to engulf him in the mire. Whatever be the dignity or the profundity of his disquisition, whether he be enlarging knowledge, or exalting affection; whether he be amusing attention with incidents, or enchaining it in suspense; let but a quibble spring up before him, and he leaves his work unfinished. This always gave him such delight that he was content to purchase it by the sacrifice of reason, propriety, and truth. The plots of his plays, whether historical or fabulous, are always crowded with incidents; and such is the power of the marvellous, even over the minds of those who despise it, that every man finds his mind more strongly seized by the tragedies of Shakspeare, than those of any other writer. Others please us by particular speeches; but he always makes us anxious for the event, and has, perhaps, excelled all but Homer,

in securing the first purpose of a writer, by exciting restless and unquenchable curiosity.

Louisa. How many plays did Shakspeare write?

Edmund. Thirty-six have usually been ascribed to him. These comprise several comedies, tragedies, and historical plays. The plots of the latter are taken chiefly from incidents in the English history.

Louisa. I have heard much about the mulberry-tree of Shakspeare. You have omitted all account of it.

Edmund. It was not a very material event in his history, but I will relate to you the circumstances relative to it. In the garden of his house at Stratford, Shakspeare planted a mulberry-tree. This house, about the year 1752, was sold to a clergyman of the name of Gastrell, a man of large fortune; who resided in it a few years, and, on account of a quarrel that he had with the magistrates of Stratford, concerning the poor's rates, peevishly declared that it should never be assessed again; and soon afterwards pulled it to the ground, sold the materials, and left the town.

Louisa. Such conduct was illiberal enough—but concerning the tree?

Edmund. Mr. Gastrell had some time before, cut that down, to save himself the trouble of showing it to those persons, whose admiration of Shakspeare had led them to visit the ground on which it stood.

Louisa. That was still more illiberal. What became of it afterwards?

Edmund. The wood of which it was composed became valuable. It was made into snuff-boxes, trinkets, and various kinds of ornamental articles, which bore a high price in consequence of the general respect in which Shakspeare was held.

Frederic. How very different were both the character and conduct of Shakspeare, from those of his dramatic contemporary, BEN JONSON. Though they both were men of great talent, Jonson was infinitely the

inferior. He was born in 1754; and was, consequently, ten years younger than Shakspeare.

Louisa. In what station of life was his father?

Frederic. He was a clergyman, who, in the reign of Queen Mary, had lost his estate, probably on account of his religion. Jonson was born, about a month after the death of his father, in a small street near Charing-cross, Westminster.

Louisa. Was his education as much confined as that of Shakspeare had been.

Frederic. Not quite. His mother first placed him in a private seminary, and afterwards sent him to Westminster school.

Sir Charles. But he does not seem to have continued there long.

Frederic. On account of her straitened circumstances, his mother thought fit to marry, for her second husband, a bricklayer. After this, it was considered requisite that Benjamin should be taken from school, though he had made considerable progress in classical learning; and should be taught his step-father's business.

Louisa. What, and become a bricklayer?

Frederic. Just so; and, for some time, he worked at that business. Part of the garden wall of Lincoln's Inn was actually built by him; working, as it has been stated, with a trowel in his hand, and a Horace in his pocket. One of the barristers, happening to walk near the place where Jonson was at work, heard him repeat some Greek verses. He consequently spoke to him, and, finding his proficiency in learning to have been very great, prevailed with some other gentlemen to join him in sending him as a student to Trinity College, Cambridge.

Louisa. I am rejoiced to hear that a man of his talents and acquirements, should, thus early, have been enabled to free himself from the trammels of a mechanical employment.

Frederic. He did not long continue in Cambridge;

for, his finances proving insufficient, he was compelled by poverty to withdraw himself from the university. He now enlisted as a private soldier, and served with the English army, against the Spaniards, in the Netherlands.

Louisa. That was worse than before.

Frederic. In this situation he acquired a character for bravery. It is related, that he encountered one of the enemy's soldiers, slew him, and carried off the spoils, in view of both the armies. When he returned to England, he was once again enabled, though by what means we are not informed, to resume his studies, and to become a member of St. John's College, Cambridge.

Mr. Allen. This persevering love of literature, amidst so many difficulties, is deserving of the highest commendation.

Frederic. It is so, sir: and one cannot but sincerely pity the misfortunes of his youth; for he was again compelled by poverty to quit the university.

Louisa. What next befel him?

Frederic. Having thus failed in his literary pursuits, and, disliking to return to his former employment of a bricklayer, he obtained admission, as an actor, at an obscure theatre, near Shoreditch, called the Green Curtain. And he had not long been there before he was induced to write some pieces for the stage. At this period, however, he was unsuccessful both as an author, and an actor.

Sir Charles. One of his contemporaries has censured his acting as mean and awkward; and has asserted that his temper was rough and untractable.

Frederic. His disposition certainly was not at any time good; but his disappointments, and the various difficulties he had been compelled to encounter in life, must have greatly tended to sour it.

Edmund. He quarrelled with every body. He killed one of the players in a duel. For this he was seized, thrown into prison, and, as he has himself said, was

"brought near to the gallows." He however was, afterwards, pardoned.

Mr. Allen. Jonson was constantly changing his views. While in prison, he was prevailed with to become a Roman Catholic; and in this faith he continued about twelve years, when he again became a Protestant.

Frederic. As soon as he was released from prison, he married; and his wife, to use his own expression, "was a shrew."

Lady Irwin. It could not have been very prudent in him to marry, and thus have a family to support, when he had scarcely the means of supporting himself. After what you have said, he could not expect any success as an actor.

Frederic. In defiance, however, of all discouragements, he endeavoured to provide for his family by the exertions of his pen. And having written a play, which was accidentally shown to Shakspeare, that good-natured poet was induced to have it acted at the Globe theatre, of which he was then the manager, and even to perform a part in it himself.

Mr. Allen. Is it known what play this was?

Frederic. No; but its success was such as to encourage Jonson to write his excellent comedy of "Every Man in his Humour," which was acted on the same stage in 1598.

Louisa. How old was Jonson at this time?

Frederic. Not much more than twenty-four; notwithstanding which, we are informed that he, thenceforward, furnished a new play every year, until the reign of James the First. He then appears to have had a permanent engagement, in the preparation of masks, and other similar entertainments, which were fashionable at court. His associate in these was the famous architect, Inigo Jones, who contrived the scenery and devices. In this employment Jonson was more or less occupied during the remainder of his life, nearly thirty years.

Louisa. How grateful ought he to have been for the kindness and liberality of Shakspeare, who had been thus instrumental in raising him from poverty, and promoting his successful establishment in the world!

Frederic. I am not aware that gratitude was a virtue in any estimation with Jonson. It is true that, after the death of Shakspeare, he writes, "To the Memory of his beloved Mr. William Shakspeare;" but this was at a period when Shakspeare was beyond the reach of envy; and there are many proofs of the jealousy and ill-nature of Jonson towards him during his life.

Sir Charles. Was he not once involved in considerable difficulty by an act of ingratitude towards his patron, James the First?

Frederic. I know not, sir, whether to call it ingratitude, or imprudence. But, in conjunction with two persons, whose names were Marston and Chapman, Jonson wrote a comedy called, "Eastward Hoe," in which he chose to ridicule the Scots people. James, being himself a Scotsman, considered the insult as personal, and caused all three to be committed to prison.

Edmund. And they would all have had their ears cut off, and been placed in the pillory, had not great interest been made with the king for their pardon. Jonson, however, afterwards conciliated his sovereign, by taxing his genius for a double portion of that adulation in which James so much delighted.

Louisa. How was Jonson chiefly supported at this time?

Frederic. Besides the profits accruing from his dramatic pieces, he had a salary from the crown; a pension from the city of London; and pensions from several noblemen and other persons, who had either been flattered by his verses, or were fearful of suffering by his satire.

Edmund. But he was a man of such irregular and dissipated habits, that he was continually plunged in ex-

penses greater than he could afford; and thus always kept poor. He sometimes drank to excess. We are told that Sir Walter Raleigh had engaged him as a private tutor to his son; but that the young gentleman did not much like the rigorous treatment which he experienced, and determined, if possible, to rid himself of him. He soon discovered Jonson's propensity to drinking, a propensity which he knew Sir Walter detested. One night Jonson came home intoxicated, and fell asleep. The youth took advantage of this. He ordered a large basket to be brought, and having, by the assistance of two men, laid Ben in it, they, with a pole, carried him, between them, to Sir Walter, with a message, that their young master, "had sent home his tutor." The consequence, no doubt, was his dismissal from the family.

Lady Irwin. As he very justly deserved. When you spoke of the difficulties that Jonson encountered at the beginning of his life, and the anxiety which he showed for the advantages of a good education, I was inclined to pity him; but his subsequent conduct deprives me of all commiseration for a man, whose inconveniences and sufferings were so entirely brought upon himself.

Frederic. Towards the latter part of his life, the poverty of Jonson induced him to write begging poems to several persons of distinction. In a letter to the Earl of Newcastle, he says, "I am not so imprudent as to borrow any sum of your lordship, for I have no faculty to pay; but my needs are such and so urging, as I do beg what your bounty can give me, in the name of good letters, and the bond of an ever-grateful and acknowledging servant to your honour." This letter appears to have been written about four years before his death.

Edmund. Previously to that time he had suffered by a paralytic attack: and of this complaint he died, on the sixteenth of August, 1637, in the sixty-third year of his age.

Mr. Allen. In his last illness Jonson was often visited by the Rev. Dr. Duppa, afterwards Bishop of Winchester, who says, that he became penitent, and expressed great sorrow for having profaned the Scriptures in his plays. Jonson certainly had a sense of religion; and his offences against morals and piety are by no means so numerous as in the writings of many of his contemporaries.

Lady Irwin. Where was he buried?

Frederic. In Westminster Abbey, at the north-west end, near the belfry; and over his grave a common pavement-stone was laid, with no more than this inscription, "O rare Ben Jonson!" A monument, however, was afterwards erected to his memory, by Dr. Duppa.

Mr. Allen. The works of Jonson were not, in general, produced without great labour and study; and even all his verses are said to have been first written in prose. His comedy, however, of "Volpone; or, the Fox," which is considered one of his best pieces, is said to have been finished in the short space of three weeks. He wrote some tragedies, but these are extremely laboured. That of "Cataline," is described, by Dr. Hurd, to be a specimen of all the errors of tragedy. His best pieces are his comedies of "Every Man in his Humour," "Volpone," the "Alchemist," and the "Silent Woman." He wrote, in the whole, about fifty dramas of different kinds, though few of them would at present bear exhibition on the stage; and was the author of several poems. His works were published together, in 1756, in seven volumes, in octavo.

...SARASWATI...

TWENTY-NINTH EVENING.

Louisa. You have spoken of Shakspeare and Jonson; but, of all the early English poets, few are greater favourites with me than the author of "Paradise Lost." I have read that poem more than once, and with so much delight, that I have been induced to search into the particulars relative to the life of its author. May I be permitted the privilege of introducing it into conversation this evening?

Sir Charles. I am sure, my dear Louisa, that neither your brother, nor Frederic, will be disinclined to allow you this privilege, as you term it.

They each immediately declared their assent; and requested of her the favour to begin.

Louisa. If I commit any errors, I confidently look for your kindness to correct me. JOHN MILTON was descended from a respectable family, which had long been settled at Milton, near Thame, in Oxfordshire. His grandfather was so zealous a Papist, that his father was disinherited for having adopted the Protestant faith, and was obliged to seek for support from the practice of the law. Milton was born in Bread-street, London, in the year 1608. He was educated first by a private tutor in his father's house, and afterwards at St. Paul's school. Such were his talents, and so great was his industry, that his progress in learning far exceeded that of the generality of boys.

Frederic. I have read, that, from the time when Milton was twelve years of age, he often passed the greater part of the night in study; and that this intense application brought on violent pains in his head, and a peculiar weakness of sight.

Louisa. From St. Paul's he was sent to Christ's College, Cambridge, where he soon distinguished himself by the superiority of his attainments. He became master not only of the Latin, Greek, Hebrew,

Chaldee, and Syriac languages; but also of nearly all the modern languages of Europe; particularly Italian, which he wrote with peculiar elegance.

Sir Charles. It is impossible to have greater proofs than these, of united talents and application.

Louisa. Whilst he was in Cambridge, he also distinguished himself by his poetical compositions, both in Latin and English.

Mr. Allen. Much has been said respecting the conduct of Milton while in the university, and it is possible he may have given offence to the heads of the college, by his acknowledged dislike to the discipline of the Established Church, or to the plan of education then adopted; for what are called puritanical principles had been instilled into his mind by his private tutor, even when a boy. He appears to have suffered the punishment of rustication, or a temporary dismissal into the country; yet he afterwards resided in college for some years, and probably until he took the degree of master of arts.

Louisa. His father had now retired from business, and gone to reside at Horton in Buckinghamshire, whither Milton also went after he left college.

Frederic. Here he wrote his charming masque, or dramatic poem, of "Comus," in the year 1634, when he was only twenty-six years of age.

Louisa. Comus was set to music and acted at Ludlow castle, before the Earl of Bridgewater, who, at that time, was President of Wales. The story of this piece is said to have been suggested by the circumstance of the daughter of this nobleman, Lady Alice Egerton, having once been separated from her company in the night, and having, for some time, wandered alone in the forest of Haywood, as she was returning from a distant visit.

Not having embarked in any settled profession, Milton obtained permission from his father to travel on the continent. He visited all the most important parts of France, Italy, Sicily, and Greece; and re-

turned to England after an absence of about fifteen months.

Edmund. He returned at a time when this country was involved in a civil war, which cost its monarch his life, and drained it of thousands of its best subjects. I trust that Milton was not aiding in the commotion.

Louisa. It does not appear that he was; for, finding his allowance from his father not sufficient for his support, he seems to have honestly applied himself to a laborious, but useful employment, that of a school-master. He took, for this purpose, a large house in Aldersgate-street, London; and soon obtained a considerable number of pupils.

Frederic. He did so; but, as Dr. Johnson has observed, he at the same time lent "his breath to blow the flames of contention." He published several pamphlets against the existing state of things, but more particularly against the government and discipline of the Church of England.

A very singular circumstance occurred to him about this time.

Louisa. You allude, I am sure, to his marriage with an Oxfordshire lady, whose name was Powell. She resided with him about a month, and then, on a pretence of visiting her relations, wholly absented herself, and resisted all his entreaties to return.

Mr. Allen. It is very extraordinary that he at last determined to be divorced from her; though no court, either of law or equity, would authorize such a procedure. He published his own opinions on the subject of divorce, and, in direct opposition to the law, proposed to marry another person. The friends of his wife were now alarmed, and became anxious for a reconciliation; which they thus effected. Whilst Milton was on a visit at the house of a relative, it was contrived that his wife should be concealed in an adjacent room; and, unsuspicious of such a stratagem, he was surprised by seeing her on her knees before him, and, with tears, imploring his forgiveness. He resisted her

entreaties for some time, but his firmness at last gave way; and, by the intercession of friends, a reconciliation was effected.

Sir Charles. This is certainly as singular an occurrence as I ever read of, and, upon the whole, a very unaccountable one.

Mr. Allen. It is the more singular, because they are said to have afterwards lived very happily together.

Frederic. Subsequently to the death of Charles the First, Milton became conspicuous as a violent political writer; and, particularly, published a tract in justification of the murder of the king. He states, even in the title, "that it is lawful, and hath been held so through all ages, for *any who have the power*, to call to account a tyrant or wicked king; and, after due conviction, to depose and put him to death, if the ordinary magistrate have neglected or denied to do it."

Sir Charles. This must certainly be a most dangerous doctrine. If the right to punish kings belongs to any who have the power, and if the power only renders the act lawful, no king can be safe, and the stability of no government can be fixed.

Mr. Allen. The point is certainly not tenable, and even Milton's warmest advocates cannot defend it. He wrote some other political tracts; and even commenced a "History of England," but brought it down to no later period than the battle of Hastings.

Frederic. For his services to Cromwell, and the commonwealth, Milton was offered the situation of adjutant-general, in one of the divisions of the army; but the new-modelling of the forces, which soon afterwards took place, proved an obstruction to the accomplishment of this measure.

Sir Charles. But he obtained another situation.

Frederic. He was appointed Latin secretary to the council of state; which had resolved neither to send nor to receive any letters but in the Latin language, as common to all nations.

Louisa. I cannot say, that I much admire, nor, per-

haps, do I understand much of the political principles of Milton. What I have chiefly been delighted with is his poetry, particularly his "Paradise Lost," a great part of which is said to have been written after he had been totally deprived of sight.

Frederic. His sight had for a long time been gradually failing; and he was quite blind, when only forty-four years of age.

Edmund. After the death of his wife, though then blind, he married again. This wife did not live twelve months, and he was a third time married.

Frederic. Respecting his blindness, we are told, that the Duke of York, afterwards King James the Second, one day called upon Milton out of curiosity, and, in the course of conversation, asked him, "Whether he did not think that his blindness was a judgment upon him for what he had written against the late king?" Milton readily replied, "If your highness think that the calamities which befal us here are indications of the wrath of heaven, in what manner, sir, are we to account for your father's fate? The displeasure of heaven must, upon this supposition, have been much greater against him than against me; for I have only lost my eyes, whereas he lost his head." At this answer the duke was exceedingly offended, and went away very angry.

Lady Irwin. I think he deserved such an answer; for the question was not only foolish, but impertinent, whatever the political principles of Milton may have been.

Louisa. At the restoration of Charles the Second, I presume, Milton must have been much alarmed for his personal safety, on account of his inveteracy against the late king.

Frederic. He was so; and, by the advice of his friends, was induced to conceal himself, until a general pardon of state delinquents was made known. So far, however, was the new government from any inclination to persecute him, that he was offered his former

place of Latin secretary; but his principles would not allow him to accept it.

Edmund. It appears that his Paradise Lost, which had been long in preparation, was published in the year 1667.

Mr. Allen. This unequalled poem is said to have been dictated by him to one of his daughters; and Milton has declared a remarkable circumstance concerning it, that "his poetical vein never flowed happily but from the autumnal to the vernal equinox, and that what he attempted at other times was not to his satisfaction." Notwithstanding the great labour with which it was written, he sold it for so small a sum as five pounds, on condition of receiving five pounds more after the sale of thirteen hundred copies of the first impression; and five pounds after the sale of an equal number of the second and third editions respectively.

Sir Charles. It has been stated that the whole sum received for it by Milton himself, was ten pounds; and that his widow, after his death, accepted from the printer the further sum of eight pounds, in full of all demands.

But how, my dear Louisa, do you like his "Paradise Regained?"

Louisa. By no means so well as Paradise Lost; though Milton is himself said to have esteemed it the better poem.

Mr. Allen. The Messiah, in Paradise Regained, with all his meekness, his dignity, and his reasoning, makes a less splendid figure than when, in the other poem, he is introduced, clothed with the terrors of Almighty vengeance, wielding the thunder of heaven, and riding along the sky, in the chariot of his power. The origin of this poem is somewhat curious. Milton had lent the manuscript of Paradise Lost to a Quaker, whose name was Ellwood; and, when it was returned, asked what he thought of it. Ellwood spoke of it in terms of great commendation, but observed, "Thou hast said much of Paradise Lost;

what hast thou to say of Paradise Found?" Milton made no reply: he sat for some time silent; then broke off the discourse, and spoke of another subject. Several months afterwards, Ellwood called upon him in London; Milton showed him his "Paradise Regained;" and said to him, "This is owing to you; for you put it into my head, by a question you formerly put to me, and which before I had not thought of."

Louisa. I recollect that Dr. Johnson, in his long critique on the poetical works of Milton, says of Paradise Lost, that "It is a poem which, considered with respect to design, may claim the first place, and with respect to performance, the second among the productions of the human mind. Every line breathes sanctity of thought, and purity of manners, except when the train of the narration requires the introduction of the rebellious spirits; and even they are compelled to acknowledge their subjection to God, in such a manner as to excite reverence, and confirm piety." In another place this eminent writer says, "The thoughts which are occasionally called forth in the progress of this poem are such as could only be produced by an imagination in the highest degree fervid and active; to which materials were supplied by incessant study, and unlimited curiosity."

Sir Charles. Dr. Johnson has also described the personal appearance and domestic habits of Milton. Do you recollect these, Louisa?

Louisa. I do, sir, perfectly. He says that Milton had the reputation of having been in his youth eminently beautiful, so as to have been called the Lady of his college. His hair, which was of a light brown colour, was parted at the top, and hung down upon his shoulders, according to the picture he has given of Adam. He was somewhat below the middle stature, vigorous, and active; and delighted in the exercise of the sword, in which he is related to have been eminently skilful. His domestic habits, so far as they are known, were those of a severe student. He drank

little strong drink of any kind. In his youth he studied late at night; but afterwards changed his hours, and rested in bed from nine to four in summer, and from nine to five in the winter. But the course of his day was best known after he was blind. When he first rose, he heard a chapter read in the Hebrew Bible, and then studied till twelve; then took some exercise for an hour; then dined; then played on the organ, and sang, or heard another sing; then studied till six; then entertained his visitors till eight; then supped: and, after a pipe of tobacco and a glass of water, went to bed.

Mr. Allen. His was a life of indefatigable study, which he continued nearly till the time of his death. This was occasioned by the gout in his stomach, on the eighth of November, 1674, in the sixty-seventh year of his age. His remains were interred near those of his father, in the chancel of the church, of St. Giles, Cripplegate; where a monument has been erected to his memory by the late Samuel Whitbread, Esq.

Edmund. I have no recollection what family Milton left.

Louisa. The children which survived him were three daughters by his first wife. One of these married a builder, another died single, and the third was married to a weaver in Spital-fields. These used to read to their father in no fewer than eight languages; which, by practice, they were capable of doing with great readiness and accuracy, though they understood no language but English.

Edmund. For Milton, my dear Louisa, was of opinion that, "one tongue was enough for a woman."

Sir Charles. One of his grand-daughters kept a little chandler's shop, at the lower end of Hollaway, and afterwards in Cock-lane, Shoreditch.

Mr. Allen. The circumstances of Milton himself were never very affluent: he indeed lived above want, and was contented with competency. During his

travels, he had been supported by his father; and even when employed as Latin secretary, his salary was no more than two hundred pounds a year. He also experienced several considerable losses, and yet died possessed of property that was valued at about three thousand pounds.

It was remarked by Sir Charles Irwin, in conclusion, that the prose works of Milton were published together, in 1806, in seven volumes in octavo.

THIRTIETH EVENING.

LOUISA, on the preceding evening, had spoken of the poetical works of Milton. Her brother now took the opportunity of declaring his partiality to the works of a poet very different from Milton; a poet who, instead of writing epic poems in blank verse, had written even tragedies in rhyme, and who had a facility in versification, greater perhaps than any other English poet. Louisa was at a loss to conjecture who this could be; and at first imagined it must have been Pope; but she said she was not aware of his having written any dramatic pieces whatever.

Sir Charles. Can you, Frederic, conjecture who the poet is to whom Edmund alludes.

Frederic. I think it must be Dryden, sir: but I hope it is not on acconnt of his rhyming tragedies that Edmund prefers him to other poets; for I recollect Dr. Johnson says of one of them, the "Conquest of Grenada," (which indeed was acted with unbounded applause) that, "it had been written with a seeming determination to glut the public with dramatic wonders; to exhibit, in its highest elevation, a theatrical meteor of incredible love, and impossible valour; and to leave no room for a wilder flight to the extravagance of posterity.

Edmund. The tragedies of this admirable poet, JOHN DRYDEN, are certainly not the favourite parts of his works with me. They contain great spirit and animation, but mingled with much bombast. As a general poet, however, he stands unrivalled for the fulness and variety of his harmony, and the free flow of his numbers.

Mr. Allen. And yet, Edmund, there is sometimes much carelessness in his versification. It is neither so smooth nor so correct as that of Pope.

Edmund. I admit this; but it is, on the whole, both more varied and more easy. Besides, we ought to make some allowance for the much earlier period in which he lived. He was born in 1631, nearly sixty years before the time of Pope.

Louisa. Where was he born, and where educated, Edmund?

Edmund. He was the grandson of Sir Erasmus Dryden, baronet; and born at Aldwinkle, in Northamptonshire. At an early age he was sent to Westminster school; and he was afterwards educated in Trinity College, Cambridge, where he appears to have resided near seven years.

Louisa. Did he, in his youth, display any extraordinary indications of genius?

Edmund. None. He wrote some verses, but they are said to have been inharmonious; and he translated into rhyme one of the satires of the Latin poet, Persius.

Sir Charles. Proceed, Edmund, in relating the principal events of his life.

Edmund. By the death of his father he inherited a small estate in Northamptonshire; liable, however, to some deductions for the support of his mother, and her other children. He afterwards became a Roman Catholic; but, at this period, candour requires me to state that, he had no fixed principles whatever, either in religion or in politics. With respect particularly to

the latter, he wrote heroic stanzas in praise of Cromwell; and, in less than two years afterwards, a poem on the happy restoration of Charles the Second, and many other loyal verses.

Frederic. In consequence of these he was appointed poet laureat, and made historiographer to the king, with an annual stipend, for the two offices, of two hundred pounds a year. I do not like this changeable conduct, when we so plainly discern an interested motive for it.

Edmund. I perfectly agree with you, Frederic; but it is more the poetry, than the character, of Dryden, which I profess to admire. A few years after his appointment to the situation of laureat, he became, professionally, a writer for the stage.

Mr. Allen. But, for some time, he was unsuccessful; notwithstanding which, the patentees of the theatre had so much confidence in his talent, as to contract with him to furnish them annually with three plays; stipulating that he should receive, as a remuneration for his labour, a certain share of profits. This is said to have produced him, on an average, about four hundred pounds per annum.

Frederic. In the midst of his theatrical career, Dryden had a keen rebuff from a burlesque drama, called the "Rehearsal," written by Villiers, Duke of Buckingham, in conjunction with other wits of the day. In this comedy, which was several times acted, Dryden was burlesqued under the character of Mr. Bayes; and, it is said that, to adapt the ridicule the more completely, the actual dress that he wore had been borrowed by some finesse; and that his very phraseology, and manner of recitation, were exactly mimicked. Several subsequent alterations, however, were made in the Rehearsal, for the purpose of ridiculing the dramatic performances of other writers.

Edmund. Though this singular production excited a laugh against the poet, it by no means seems to have injured his reputation; and, in his satirical poem of

Absalom and Achitophel, he fully avenged himself upon the noble author of the Rehearsal, under the name of Zimri. In this poem, it is said that, Absalom, Achitophel, and David, represented respectively, the Duke of Monmouth, Lord Shaftesbury, and King Charles the Second.

Mr. Allen. We approach another important era in the history of Dryden; his conversion, of which Edmund has spoken, to the Roman Catholic religion.

Frederic. Like his political conversion, this was a very sudden one, and apparently from an interested motive. It took place on the accession to the throne of James the Second, who was himself certainly a Papist at heart; and who had it in contemplation to restore Popery in this country. Previously to this, Dryden had written many bitter sarcasms against the Popish clergy.

Mr. Allen. His conversion certainly appears to have been so nicely timed, that it is hardly possible, even for liberality itself, to ascribe the measure to any other than interested motives. It is also to be remarked that, either from age, indolence, or exhaustion, he was about this time in such distressed circumstances, that he even applied, and in vain, for employment as an excise officer, or for a situation in the customs; stating, that he had three sons, all of whom he was educating beyond his means.

Edmund. In defence of his new creed, Dryden published a poetical dialogue, entitled the "Hind and the Panther." In this production, the Catholic establishment is represented by the hind, and that of the Church of England, by the panther; which two animals very learnedly discuss the various disputed topics of transubstantiation, church-authority, infallibility, &c.

Louisa. Could such a poem as this ever be sufficiently interesting to excite attention?

Edmund. It certainly did excite attention; for, notwithstanding the absurdity of its plan, it was read with

great avidity. In the following year he published a poem in celebration of the birth of the son of James the Second; and in this he predicted a commencing era of prosperity to the church and nation.

Mr. Allen. By church, he of course meant the Romish church; and yet, within a few months after his prediction, the Revolution took place, William the Third ascended the throne, and the Protestant religion became more firmly established than ever.

Frederic. One of the first measures of the new government was to dispossess Dryden of his places of poet laureat, and historiographer; for these his religion now disqualified him from holding.

Louisa. This must have been a very serious loss to him.

Edmund It certainly was so; but the Earl of Dorset (who though, as Lord Chamberlain, had been obliged to withdraw his public pension,) had the generosity to allow Dryden an annuity of equal value out of his own estate.

Louisa. That was a noble act.

Edmund. A few years afterwards was published, a "Translation of Juvenal and Persius," in which five satires of Juvenal, and the whole of Persius, were the work of Dryden. But the most popular of his works, was his translation of Virgil into English verse. This he commenced in 1694, when he was somewhat more than sixty-three years of age; and finished in about three years. In the dedication of the pastorals to Lord Clifford, he speaks of it as the production of "the wretched remainder of a sickly age, worn out with study, and oppressed with fortune, without other support than the constancy and faith of a Christian."

Frederic. It has, however, been estimated that Dryden gained by this undertaking, betwixt twelve and thirteen hundred pounds; for his friends liberally entered into a subscription for its encouragement.

Sir Charles. And yet, even after having prepared a

second edition for the press, he was so poor as to be compelled to write for his daily subsistence. Scarcely relieved from one heavy task, he was obliged to hasten another. When on the verge of his seventieth year, he was compelled, by his necessities, to enter into contract with a bookseller, to supply him with ten thousand verses, at the rate of sixpence a line.

Frederic. This bargain produced, in 1700, his "Fables, ancient, and modern, translated into Verse from Homer, Ovid, Boccace, and Chaucer." The volume in which these were published, comprised also his beautiful ode on St. Cecilia's Day, which he declared occupied him a fortnight to compose and correct.

Mr. Allen. The time was now at hand that was to terminate all the schemes and labours of this great poet. He had, for some years, been harrassed by two painful complaints, the gravel and the gout, and at last was a cripple in his limbs; but the immediate cause of his death was a mortification in one of his feet. This event took place on the first of May, 1701, in the seventy-first year of his age; and his remains were interred in Westminster Abbey.

Edmund. The account that has been given of Dryden's funeral is a very extraordinary one.

Mr. Allen. That, Edmund, to which you allude, of Lord Halifax having undertaken to defray the expenses, and bestow five hundred pounds on the erection of a monument to him; and the whole proceedings being stopped by the strange conduct of Lord Jefferies, who agreed to double this sum; and the body being at last interred at the expense of Dryden's family, has been proved a fabrication.

Frederic. And yet the authenticated account is not a little remarkable. A magnificent interment had been prepared by several persons of distinction. The body, at the suggestion of Dr. Garth, was removed from Gerrard-street, to the college of physicians; whence, after he had pronounced a Latin oration in praise of the deceased, it was conveyed to Westminster

Abbey, attended by more than a hundred mourning coaches.

Sir Charles. Ward, the author of a book called the "London Spy," relates, that there was, on the occasion, a performance of solemn music at the college, and that the procession, as he saw it pass along the streets, was accompanied by a concert of hautboys and trumpets.

Mr. Allen. Do you recollect, Edmund, who it was that Dryden married?

Edmund. He married Lady Elizabeth Howard, sister to the Earl of Berkshire; but the alliance does not appear to have been attended by any great pecuniary advantages to him. He had three sons, all of whom were educated in Rome. His wife survived him about thirteen years, during several of which she was a lunatic; having been deprived of her senses by a nervous fever.

Mr. Allen. It has been observed of Dryden, that he was a man of various and extensive, rather than of deep and accurate acquirements. It is not a little extraordinary, that he should have been a believer in what is called judicial astrology, or the pretended art of foretelling events by the position of the planets; and that he himself professed an ability to do this. Congreve, who was personally and familiarly acquainted with him, has represented the moral character of Dryden to have been, in every respect, not only blameless, but amiable. He says that he was humane, compassionate, forgiving, and friendly: that he was easy of access himself, but, in his advances to others, backward and diffident, and of all men the most easy to be repelled.

His works, which are very numerous, and of various description, have lately been collected, and published in eighteen volumes, in octavo.

THIRTY-FIRST EVENING.

Examples illustrative of the Misery consequent upon Imprudence, Dissipation, and Vice.

WHEN the literary party were assembled this evening, Mr. Allen proposed somewhat to interrupt the mode that had usually been pursued. The intention of this was, that, under the class of poets, he might state some particulars respecting a few persons, the incidents of whose lives afforded very useful lessons, illustrative of the miseries that are consequent upon imprudence, dissipation, and vice. The persons to whom he alluded were Otway, Pattison, Boyce, Collins, Chatterton, and Dermody. Some of them, he observed, were little known to the world as poets; but he hoped that the facts he had to relate concerning them, would not, on that account, be found the less instructive.

Permission having instantly been obtained, Mr. Allen commenced with THOMAS OTWAY, one of our most celebrated tragic poets; who, he said, was the son of a clergyman, and born at Trottin, in Sussex, in the year 1651. He was first sent to Westminster school, and afterwards to Christchurch, Oxford; but left the university without a degree. Whether he did this from want of money, from impatience of academical restraint, or from eagerness to mingle with the world, is not known; but it is well known that, early in life, he contracted many low and dissipated habits.

"A principal object of his ambition seems to have been to attain reputation as an actor. Accordingly he went to London, apparently with this intention; but the scheme failed; he was compelled to leave the stage, and he commenced dramatic writer. In his twenty-fifth year he produced a tragedy called 'Alcibiades;' and, about twelve months afterwards, another, in heroic verse, called 'Don Carlos.' The latter of these is said to have been so successful as to have been acted thirty

nights following. Otway was also the author of some comedies, and of two other well-known tragedies, 'Venice Preserved,' and the 'Orphan.'

"Whatever may have been the success of these productions, they were certainly not of any permanent benefit to their author; who is described to have been a favourite companion of the dissolute wits of his time. Bad company, and extravagant habits, soon involved Otway in great distress. His dramatic talents, however, excited pity; and, in commiseration of his forlorn circumstances, a cornet's commission, in a regiment of horse, then serving in Flanders, was obtained for him. He joined the regiment; but, being soon tired of a military life, returned to London in great indigence; and again endeavoured to subsist by writing for the stage.

"The accounts of his death have been variously related. Dr. Johnson says that, having been compelled, by his necessities, to contract debts, and having been hunted (as he expresses it) by the terriers of the law, he retired to a public house on Tower-hill, where he died of absolute want. One of his biographers relates that, almost naked, he went out in the rage of hunger, and, finding a gentleman in a neighbouring coffee-house, asked him for a shilling; that, the gentleman gave him a guinea, and Otway, going away, bought a roll, and was choked with the first mouthful. Pope has stated that, having had an intimate friend, who was murdered in the street, the murderer fled towards France, and that Otway pursued him, on foot, as far as Dover; where he was seized with a fever, occasioned by excessive fatigue; and that, afterwards, he was conveyed to London, where he died.

"But whatever may have been the cause of his death, it has never been denied that indigence, and its concomitants, sorrow and despondency, pressed hard upon him through life. He died on the fourteenth of April, 1685, in the thirty-fourth year of his age; and

his remains were deposited in a vault under the church of St. Clement Danes, London.

"The second person whom I shall mention," (continued Mr. Allen) "is perhaps rather to be pitied for the consequences of excessive imprudence, than censured for those of absolute vice. His name was WILLIAM PATTISON. He was the son of a respectable farmer, who resided in the county of Sussex; was born at Peasmarth in that county, in the year 1706; and educated at Appleby, in Westmoreland. Having early discovered a propensity to learning, and, particularly, a taste for poetry, the Earl of Thanet, the landlord of his father, was at the expense of his education, and sent him to Sidney College, Cambridge. Here, though not disinclined to application, he contracted a habit of desultory reading, and had no relish for academical studies. He was beloved by his fellow students, though his temper could not bear restraint. On a quarrel with the tutor, he rashly struck his name off the college boards, and, in utter thoughtlessness, quitted it for ever. His gown he left behind; and made an apology for his conduct only by an insulting satirical farewell, which he penned upon it.

"Headstrong, thoughtless youth! little did he contemplate the miseries which, by his folly, he was soon to encounter. He fled to London, to take up the trade of a poet! Even now would his friends have forgiven, and replaced him. But every importunity to return to college, he resisted. The pleasures of the town, the desire of being known, a romantic expectation that he should find some generous patron to reward his merit, and a determination no longer to endure restraint, rendered him deaf to advice. In reply to a friend who had written to express his fears respecting the innumerable temptations to which a youth of his volatile disposition was liable, in such a place, he pictured every thing as promising success and happiness: he had re-

solved on running the perilous career of literary glory; all he hoped for seemed, for a while, to be realized: he mixed with wits, and passed his time with men of pleasantry and genius. Unhappy youth! without fortune, without even any reasonable means of subsistence; a few months elapsed, and all these vivid phantoms of happiness were vanished. Involved in the most deplorable wretchedness, he describes himself as destitute of friends, of money; a prey to hunger, and without a roof to shelter him; passing his days in misery, and his nights on a bench in St. James's-park. His first prudent thought appears to have been a resolution to solicit subscriptions for a volume of poems, which he proposed to publish. A letter that he wrote to a gentlemen on this subject, affords a dreadful picture of the state both of his body and mind.

'*Sir*,

'If you was ever touched with a sense of humanity, consider my condition. What I *am*, my proposals will inform you; what I *have been*, Sidney College, in Cambridge, can witness; but what I *shall be* some few hours hence, I tremble to think.—Spare my blushes.—I have not enjoyed the common necessaries of life for these two days; and can hardly hold to subscribe myself,—Yours, &c.'

"He died soon afterwards, in the year 1727, and the twenty-first year of his age!

"SAMUEL BOYSE, of whom I shall next give you an account, affords an example of the most atrocious depravity. He was an Irishman, the son of a dissenting clergyman, and born in Dublin, in the year 1708. After having received the first rudiments of education at a private school in Dublin, he was sent, at the age of eighteen, to the university of Glasgow. Scarcely had he been there twelve months, when his studies were interrupted, and his views in life wholly changed, by a rash and most imprudent attachment for the daughter of a tradesman, whom he married before he

had attained his twentieth year. This marriage interrupted his studies, involved him in increased expenses, and, instead of reclaiming him from dissipation, to habits of virtue, seems only to have opened new temptations to extravagance and vice. He became involved in pecuniary difficulties, which compelled him to quit the university abruptly, and return to Dublin, whither he took his wife and her sister.

"His father, more amiable than prudent, not only relieved his present necessities, but continued to support him and his family, without ever appearing to have urged him to procure an independent livelihood. The son, as mean as his father was indulgent, instead of employing himself in the pursuit of any profession, was lost in dissipation. At length, by his thoughtless extravagance, his parent was reduced to beggary, and during his last illness, was supported by presents from his congregation; after his death he was buried at their expense.

"Now it was that the unprincipled youth of whom I am speaking, began to feel the evils of his own misconduct. Deprived of his usual support, he repaired to Edinburgh; and, having a turn for poetry, obtained sufficient encouragement to publish a volume of poems. These procured for him the notice, and excited the compassion, of several persons of rank. His prospects began to brighten; his reputation as a poet was in some degree established. The Duchess of Gordon obtained for him the promise of a situation which would have placed him beyond the reach of indigence; but, being at a little distance from Edinburgh, and, the day on which he was directed to deliver her grace's recommendatory letter having been rainy, Boyse declined exposing himself to the weather, and did not afterwards deliver it until the place was given away.

"The consequence of carelessness and imprudence like this may easily be imagined. He became involved in distress; and was compelled to leave Edinburgh to escape the pursuit of his creditors. The duchess,

however, did not still forsake him. His project being next to visit London, she gave him a letter of introduction to Pope. He also obtained letters to the Lord Chancellor, and to several other persons of rank. Pope happened to be from home when he called, and Boyse did not repeat his visit; and it has been doubted whether he delivered any of the other letters. But, if he did, his indiscretion prevented him from deriving any benefit from them; and his miseries soon became so great, as to be almost unparalleled in the records of literary history. These miseries could rouse him to no other exertion than the writing of letters to implore relief; and never perhaps was there an object more unworthy of commiseration.

"His indolence and indiscretion were even exceeded by his low selfishness, and gross sensuality. With money that he has extorted from benevolence, by his supplicatory letters, he has been known to go to a tavern, order an extravagant dinner, and drink of the most costly wines, without a single companion to participate the luxury!—and, during this selfish revelling, his wife and child were left starving at home. You will not be surprised when I inform you that his friends, wearied by perpetual applications for relief, at length withheld contributions which they found to be so ill bestowed.

"After this, almost wholly deprived of support, his wretchedness became so extreme, that he had no clothes in which he could decently appear abroad. Even the sheets on which he had lain, were sold to procure him food; and he was compelled to lie in bed with no other covering than a blanket. His mode of writing in this situation was singular. He sat up in bed wrapped in his blanket, through which he had cut two holes, large enough to receive his arms; and placing the paper on his knee, scribbled as well as he could, the verses which he had to sell for his subsistence. He has even been known to supply the want of a shirt, by

tying slips of white paper round his neck and wrists; and, in this plight, appearing abroad; while his other apparel was scarcely sufficient for the purposes of decency.

"In the midst of all this wretchedness, he published 'The Deity,' a poem which was highly praised by some of the best critics of the age. Even Pope asserted that there were lines in it which he should not have been ashamed to have written; and Harvey introduced a favourable notice of it into his Meditations.

"Boyse was preserved from absolute starvation, only by writing for magazines and other periodical publications, and by occasional benefactions, which he often procured through the vilest arts of deceit. These arts were too various for me to enumerate. One of the most frequent and most extensive of them was to issue proposals for the publication of works, either written or to be written, to obtain the subscription money, and think no more of his engagement. Another, and still worse, was to employ his wife in circulating a report that he was dying, and to entreat the gift of money to sustain him in his last moments; and many persons have been surprised to meet, in the streets, the very man to whom they had just sent relief, as on the verge of dissolution.

"It is said that, being a good French scholar, he would have been able to earn a tolerable subsistence by translating works from that language into English. This was attempted; but his want of principle was such, that, by the time he had finished one sheet, he generally pawned the book that had been put into his hands for translation: if his employer redeemed it, another sheet would be completed, and the book again be pawned; and this perpetually.

"He was in this forlorn and wretched condition several years; but, at length, tempted by an allowance, though of only half a guinea a week, which he could look to with certainty, he was induced to retire into

the country, for the purpose of compiling an 'Historical Review of the Transactions of Europe, from the Commencement of the war with Spain, in 1739, to the Insurrection in Scotland, in 1745.'

"During his residence in the country, though his allowance was extremely small, he contrived to be frequently intoxicated; and he at last became so completely sottish, that his abilities, if not his reason, were sensibly impaired. About this time his wife died; and, assuming the appearance of great concern on the occasion, and being unable to purchase mourning for her, he tied a piece of black ribbon round the neck of a lap-dog, which he carried about in his arms.

"On his return to London, his conduct became so decent, that hopes were entertained of his entire reformation. About nine months before his death he married the widow of a cutler, with whom he had no money, but who proved a careful nurse to him during a lingering illness. The remorse which, during this illness, he experienced from the recollection of his former profligacy, is finely described in his interesting poem, entitled the 'Recantation.' He died in obscure lodgings near Shoe-lane, London, in the month of March, 1749, and the forty-second year of his age; and was buried at the charge of the parish.

"The whole life of this wretched man seems to have been passed in a kind of conflict betwixt his depraved inclinations, and those religious principles which, by his good education, had been early impressed upon his mind, and so deeply as never to have been wholly effaced. If his life be candidly considered, it will be found that he suffered no distress of which he could justly complain. He exhausted the patience of one set of friends after another, with such unfeeling contempt and ingratitude, that we are not to wonder at his having been compelled to live the precarious life of an outcast, whom no society is bound to maintain.

THIRTY-SECOND EVENING.

Continuation of Examples illustrative of the Miseries consequent upon Imprudence, Dissipation, and Vice.

MR. ALLEN, having been requested by the young gentlemen to resume his narratives, proceeded as follows :—

"The person to whom I shall next call your attention will be WILLIAM COLLINS; an amiable, but misguided, and unfortunate young man, some of whose poetry, particularly his "Ode to the Passions," I know is familiar to you all. He was the son of a hatter, of Chichester; was born in the year 1720, and educated first on the foundation of Winchester College, and afterwards in Queen's, and Magdalen Colleges, Oxford. His father died in embarrassed circumstances, and Collins was supported at the university, on a stipend allowed him by an uncle.

"His success in the college exercises seduced him into so early an application to poetry, that, while he was in the university, he published his 'Oriental Eclogues;' but these, notwithstanding their merit, were, at the time, wholly unsuccessful. The acquirements of Collins were great. Not only was he acquainted with the learned languages, but with the Italian, French, and Spanish tongues; and, full of hopes, full of projects, high in fancy, and strong in retention, he disdained all thought of settling in any profession. He seems to have imagined, like Pattison, that, by the exertions of his pen only, he could open for himself a road to fortune and to fame.

"After the usual term of residence in college, to obtain his first degree, he suddenly quitted the university; and, without even consulting his friends, went to London with numerous projects in his head, and little money in his pocket. Literary adventures have generally been subject to a life of discomfort and

perplexity; nor was Collins an exception to this common lot. He designed many works; but, upon his first entrance into the world, was seduced into scenes of gaiety and dissipation, which prevented his seriously applying to any pursuit, These he had not long the means of continuing. It was represented to him that he had not a single guinea of his own; and that even the fashionable dress which he wore, he would never be able to pay for. Such representations, however, were of no avail: he was involved within the giddy vortex of pleasure, and unable to retreat.

"While thus living loosely about the town, he occasionally wrote many short poems; but several of these were burnt as soon as they were written. He projected a 'History of the Revival of Learning,' but he does not appear to have finished any part of it; and planned several tragedies, but only planned them. He wrote his 'Odes' for a present supply. They were purchased by a bookseller, but the profits derived from their sale, were not sufficient even to pay the expenses of printing; though they have since been estimated among the most popular productions in our language. This circumstance was so great a source of mortification to him, that, some time afterwards, when he received a legacy of two thousand pounds, on the death of his uncle, he made good to the publisher the deficiency of the unsold odes, and, in his haughty resentment of the public taste, consigned all the remaining copies to the flames.

"Previously to his coming into possession of this money, Collins had, at times, been involved in the greatest distress. In one instance, when skulking from the pursuit of a bailiff on watch to arrest him, Dr. Johnson, who at that time was himself in circumstances not much more enviable, prevailed with a bookseller to retrieve him from his embarrassment, by advancing a sum of money, on his engagement to write a translation of Aristotle's Poetics, with a commentary. It was not long after this that Collins

received his uncle's legacy; on which, instead of finishing the work that he had engaged to perform, he chose to repay to the bookseller the sum that had been lent.

"Irresolution seems to have been the great fault of Collins through life. Dr. Johnson, who knew him well, has asserted that, notwithstanding the errors of his conduct, his morals were pure, and his sentiments pious; that, in the midst of his dissipation, he preserved the source of action unpolluted; that his principles were never shaken; that his distinctions of right and wrong were never confounded; and that his faults had in them nothing either of malignity or design.

"The incidents of the latter part of his life cannot be remembered but with feelings of the most poignant regret. His literary disappointments preyed secretly upon his spirits, and gradually repressed his finest exertions. The money that had been bequeathed to him, accustomed as he had been to a life of want, unchequered even by hope, appeared an inexhaustible treasure; and he eagerly snatched that temporary relief, with which the bottle flatters and seduces. But his health declined; and the clouds which he perceived gathering over his intellects, he endeavoured to disperse by travel. He passed into France, but, finding himself constrained to yield to his malady, returned. After his return, Dr. Johnson paid him a visit at Islington, where Collins was waiting for his sister, whom he had directed to meet him. There was then nothing of disorder perceptible in his mind by any except himself; but he had withdrawn from study, and travelled with no other book than an English Testament, such as children carry to school. When his friend took this into his hand, out of curiosity, to see what companion he had chosen, 'I have but one book,' said Collins, 'but that is the best.' This circumstaance is recorded on his tomb:—

'He join'd pure faith to strong poetic powers,
And, in reviving reason's lucid hours,
Sought on one book his troubled mind to rest,
And rightly deem'd the Book of God the best.'

"Collins was, for some time, confined in a house of lunatics; but was afterwards given up to the care of his sister in Chichester, where he died in the year 1756, and in the thirty-sixth year of his age.

"I will now present you with a short account of a young man whose life commenced in indigence, and terminated, as early as his eighteenth year, in the most abject wretchedness; and yet whose superior talents, under the care of proper instructors, and the control of a well-regulated mind, might have raised him to eminence and happiness. His name was THOMAS CHATTERTON. The father of this unhappy youth was originally a singing man in the cathedral of Bristol, and afterwards master of a free-school in that city: he died in August, 1752, and this son was born on the twentieth of November following.

"When about five years of age, he was placed at the same school which had formerly been conducted by his father; but either his faculties were not yet opened, or the waywardness of his genius was such, that he was returned to his mother as a child incapable of improvement. She was much distressed at the tardy understanding of her son, till he accidentally saw a French musical manuscript, with beautifully painted capital letters. Taking a momentary advantage of his curiosity respecting these, his mother was enabled to initiate him in the alphabet; after which she taught him to read from an old black-lettered Bible.

"Chatterton was now admitted into a charity-school, where he was boarded, clothed, and instructed in writing and arithmetic. Instead of the thoughtless levity of childhood, he had the gravity, pensiveness, and melancholy of maturer life. He was frequently so lost in contemplation, that, for many days successively, he would say little, and even that apparently by constraint. At the hours allotted for play, he generally

retired to read; and now was particularly solicitous to borrow books. Before he was twelve years of age, he had read near seventy volumes, chiefly on subjects connected with history and divinity. He had also begun to write verses, and appeared to have a taste for drawing.

"When twelve years old he was confirmed; and, we are informed, that he made many sensible and serious remarks on the awfulness of the ceremony, and on his own feelings preparatory to it. Happy indeed would it have been if sentiments like these, so congenial to the amiable dispositions of youth, had continued to influence his conduct during his maturer years.

"On his leaving school, Chatterton was articled to an attorney in Bristol. Here he conducted himself with great regularity, but his temper was sullen and gloomy. He was much confined to the office, though he had little actual employment; and he occupied his leisure hours chiefly in studying heraldry, and English antiquities.

"During the time he was in this service, and when about seventeen years of age, he attempted a singular fraud on the public credulity. A new bridge was opened at Bristol, and Chatterton sent to one of the Bristol newspapers, 'A Description of the Friars first passing the old Bridge,' purporting to be taken from an ancient manuscript. To persons who examined him respecting this manuscript he declared that he had found it among some papers, taken from a chest in Redcliffe church, Bristol. This was the commencement of a series of literary forgeries, which he subsequently contrived to a great extent. The father of Chatterton had formerly taken away from the same church, baskets full of deeds, and other manuscripts on parchment, which had been deposited there for several generations, and which he chiefly used for the covering of books and other similar purposes. It was among these parchments that Chatterton pretended to

have discovered several pieces of poetry, written, as he asserted, by Rowley, a priest of the fifteenth century; and a few of which he made public. The whole of them, some years afterwards, were printed under the name of Rowley, and many learned men were deceived by them; but the fact of their forgery has since been ascertained.

"Hitherto the religious principles of this singular youth seem to have been good. How he was unfortunate enough to receive a tincture of infidelity, we have not been informed; but a change, at this early period of life, took place in his religious belief. He became a deist; and, connecting infidelity with despair, avowed his determination of ending a miserable life by self-destruction. His master, on perusing this threat (which Chatterton had written in a paper, purporting to be his will, and left exposed in the office), dismissed him from his service, after a continuance in it of about two years and three quarters.

"It had been with Chatterton an early maxim, that 'God had sent his creatures into the world with arms long enough to reach any thing, if they would but be at the trouble of making use of them.' Whether this maxim had any influence upon his conduct, on his entrance into life, cannot now be known; but, after his dismissal by the attorney, he went to London, on a literary speculation, and, in the full expectation that he should, without difficulty, be able to subsist by the exertions of his pen. This was in the month of April, 1774, when he was little more than seventeen years old; an age at which youthful indiscretion stands peculiarly in need of government and restraint.

"He had written to several booksellers in London, who, finding his abilities likely to be of advantage to them, were by no means sparing of encomiums respecting him. He wrote some poems for periodical publications, and many pieces in prose. The activity of his mind, for a while, was almost unparalleled. The booksellers encouraged him with the most san-

guine hopes of success. In a letter to one of his friends, written in high flow of spirits, he states, that he already was paid four guineas a month by one magazine, and that he should engage to write a history of England, and other pieces, which would produce him more than double that sum. He speaks of an engagement to write a voluminous history of London, for which, besides a handsome salary, he was to be accommodated with board and lodging at the bookseller's house.

"We cannot be surprised that a youth, thrown so early upon all the dangers of the metropolis, vain of the reception he had met with, and without a friend to restrain him, should soon become involved in difficulties. Chatterton early acquired a taste for dissipation. This involved him in expenses that he was unable to sustain. The splendid visions of his first projects proved abortive. The labour of writing for periodical publications, together with the uncertainty of the emoluments derivable from it, were such that he was soon involved in poverty. All his other literary projects failed; for his vanity seems to have led him to hopes, which, in sound judgment, he could not have entertained. He sunk, almost at once, from the highest elevation of hope and illusion, to the depths of despair. He now removed from a house in which he had lodged, in Shoreditch, to another, kept by a Mrs. Angel, a sack maker, in Brook-street, Holborn. Here, abandoning his literary pursuits, he proposed to go out to Africa, as a surgeon's mate; imagining that the little knowledge of surgery which he had acquired in the course of his miscellaneous reading, would be sufficient recommendation of him for such a service. But in this project he was also disappointed. No longer employed by the booksellers, he became involved in the most deplorable wretchedness. He settled into a gloomy despondence, and the short remainder of his days was passed in a conflict between pride and poverty. On the day preceding that of his death he refused an offer

from Mrs. Angel to partake of her dinner: he assured her he was not hungry, though she had reason to believe that he had eaten nothing for two or three days before. On the twenty-fifth of August, 1770, he was found dead in his room, in consequence of having swallowed poison. This was in his eighteenth year, and little more than four months after the commencement of what he, thoughtlessly and mistakenly, had imagined would prove an uninterrupted career of happiness and fame. He was interred at the expense of the parish, in the burying-ground belonging to the Shoe-lane workhouse.

"When we consider the fate of this unhappy youth, every allowance must be made for his unprotected and friendless situation. He was but a boy, even at the time of his death; and had he fallen into settled and sober habits, his excellent understanding would, in all probability, have led him to discover the fallacy of those irreligious notions which he had hastily embraced, and to the influence of which his premature death must principally be ascribed. We cannot defend his conduct, but we must commiserate the melancholy end of such a youth, led on by an ardent spirit, without guide, and without restraint.

"These," continued Mr. Allen, "are but a few of the numerous examples which I could relate to you, of misery arising from imprudence in the outset, and from dissipation and vice in later stages of life. They are, however, probably sufficient to convince you of the necessity there is of a due restraint upon the passions; and how beneficial it is implicitly to submit, in youth, to the direction of others of sounder knowledge, and more correct experience than yourselves.

"I will mention only one person more, an obscure Irish poet, but a young man of extraordinary abilities; Thomas Dermody, the son of a schoolmaster, at Ennis, in Ireland. He was born in the month of January, 1775; and, when only in his ninth year, had

acquired, under the superintendence of his father, such a knowledge of the Greek and Latin languages, as, even thus early, to be employed in teaching the rudiments of them to the other boys. It will increase your astonishment to be informed that, when only ten years old, his biographer says he had written as much poetry as Cowley, Milton, or Pope had produced at nearly double that age.

"But it is most lamentable that his father only instructed him in classical learning, and was entirely negligent both of religious and moral attainments. He was also fond of drinking in low and dissipated company; and this pernicious example gave a most unhappy turn to the conduct of his son. Not very long after the time of which I have spoken, the boy ran away from his friends, and went to Dublin. At first he was so much delighted with the various objects which caught his attention, that he did not trouble himself to reflect that he was in a large city, pennyless and unknown. But his pleasure soon gave place to misery; he was obliged to sell part of his clothes to satisfy his hunger. In a forlorn condition, he had now no other amusement than to stroll about the streets. Durin one of his walks, he stopped at the window of a bookseller, and, taking up one of the books, was cautiously observed by the owner, who hastened to watch his property. But what was the astonishment of this man on finding that the little stranger was earnestly poring over the work of a Greek author! On questioning him, and finding that the boy understood what he read, he asked him into his house, and gave him some food. Dermody explained his situation; and it immediately occurred to the bookseller, that, by relieving his necessities, he might be induced to teach his son the Latin language. He made the proposition, and Dermody readily assented to the terms; but, having no steadiness of perseverance, he soon neglected to fulfil his part of the engagement. His employer, however, pitying his forlorn condition, would not throw him upon the world

entirely friendless, and, therefore, recommended him to another bookseller, as a shop-boy.

"Soon after this he became known to Dr. Houlton, of Dublin, who, as you may imagine, was not a little surprised, to see a country-looking lad, meanly dressed, and so young, standing in a book-shop, and reading Longinus in the original Greek. He entered into conversation with him; and, finding Dermody skilled in that language, invited him to dinner. On examining him respecting his knowledge, the doctor was so much astonished to find him well acquainted with the writings of several Greek and Latin authors, that he offered his house as a residence, till some better situation could be found for him. Delighted with the thoughts of living with a gentleman, and a scholar, he accepted the invitation with many expressions of gratitude.

"Dr. Houlton, one day, presented Dermody to a learned friend of his acquaintance, having previously spoken of his astonishing acquirements. On seeing a lad of small size, with an open collar, and of almost infantine appearance, the gentleman exclaimed, in a low voice, 'Pshaw! it is impossible.'—'Try him,' replied the doctor. The gentleman then took out a small edition of Horace, and asked him to construe any ode he liked best. Dermody returned the book, and requested that he would fix upon one. This having been done, and the gentleman remarking that he had selected a very short one, 'The more suitable,' answered Dermody, with a smile, 'to a little scholar.' He then seated himself at a table, and, in nine minutes, produced a *poetical translation* of it. The gentleman was so much astonished, that he presented the little poet with the Horace to go into one of his breeches pockets, and a handful of silver to occupy the other.

"Had Dermody been a boy of docile and amiable character, he might have become an eminent and a happy man; but he would never attempt to correct any errors in his conduct, and would not endure even the least contradiction. Dr. Houlton, after a little

while, found him entirely ungovernable; and, at the end of about ten weeks, was under the necessity of setting him at liberty; but he, at the same time, furnished him with a considerable sum of money, and gave him proper advice relative to his future conduct.

"After having wandered about, for some time, without any settled home, Dermody next found an asylum with the scene-painter of the Dublin theatre. This man introduced him to the players: and some attempts were made to place him in a situation where he might prosecute his studies; but he disgusted every one by his ingratitude and bad conduct.

"Abandoned now by every person of character, he enlisted into the army as a private soldier; and, behaving with some decency under the check of military discipline, was progressively advanced to the ranks of corporal and sergeant. In the month of September, 1794, and in the nineteenth year of his age, he embarked with the regiment for England. He subsequently accompanied it abroad, in an expedition under the Earl of Moira; and behaved so well, that his lordship promoted him to a lieutenancy in the waggon corps; but, on the reduction of the army, Dermody was put on the half-pay list. Lord Moira, however, in addition to his pay, presented him with a considerable sum of money out of his own pocket; and promised him support if he would conduct himself, for the future, with propriety.

"Dermody now came to London, and soon dissipated all his money in the lowest and most degrading vices. After a short time he was arrested for debt, and committed to the Fleet prison. From this situation Lord Moira liberated him; but, with a threat that, unless he amended his conduct, he would entirely withdraw his protection. The reproof had a momentary effect; but he soon relapsed into bad habits, and successively disgusted numerous friends whom, by his very extraordinary talents, he had acquired. He went on from one scene of low depravity to another,

until his constitution was undermined, and he presented a loathsome picture of genius degraded by vice. At length, wasted by disease, the consequence of habitual intemperance, he died in an obscure hovel, near Sydenham, in Devonshire, on the fifteenth of July, 1802, in the twenty-eighth year of his age.

"These little histories afford some important lessons. We learn from them, in the first place, how much unhappiness arises from a want of attention in parents to instil early impressions of religion upon the minds of their children, and to check the first growth of corrupt passions and vicious inclinations. When youth, unrestrained, becomes immersed in dissipation, the seductions of false pleasure are daily more enticing; and the habit of vice once begun, we know not where it will end. It destroys every inclination to industry, it sinks men into indolence, drains them of the means of their subsistence, and eventually ruins both their happiness and health. In *Pattison* we have sad example of the consequences of giving way to passion, and of the evils that follow from opposing those restraints which are absolutely necessary for the government of youth. The memoir of *Boyse*, shows us that he was scarcely ever in a situation of distress which was not the result of his own folly. Had the talents which he possessed, instead of being shrouded in indolence, or prostituted to vice, been employed according to the dictates of reason and of virtue, he might have risen to eminence and respectability, and escaped the unhappiness which marked every period of his literary career. His life, however, will be far from useless, if it in any degree contribute to convince the dissipated and thoughtless of the misery which dissipation and thoughtlessness must inevitably produce. *Collins* is the only one of the whole whom we can sincerely pity. His were chiefly faults of indiscretion, until his indiscretion had involved him in irregularity; and even then he never lost sight of the main principles of

religion and morality. In *Chatterton*, particularly, we discern the wretched condition of one who is deprived of all the comforting hopes of another state, and who is reduced to seek for happiness in the vicious gratifications of life. With respect to *Dermody*, his character affords no incident on which the mind can dwell with pleasure. His whole life forms a disgusting and almost uniform picture of depravity; deducible, apparently, from a neglect of his parent to infuse right principles into his mind; from the pernicious example of low dissipation, which that parent set him; and from the want of an early restraint of his own passions.

"These relations will be further useful if they serve to 'remind those who, in confidence of superior capacities or attainments, disregard the common maxims of life; that nothing can supply the want of prudence; and that negligence and irregularity, long continued, will make even knowledge useless, art ridiculous, and genius contemptible.'"

THIRTY-THIRD EVENING.

Mr. Allen. AFTER the interruption that I have occasioned, during the last two evenings, it will be requisite for you to go back to a period earlier, perhaps, than the death of any of the persons I have mentioned, except Otway. This must be done, for the purpose of introducing some of the celebrated poets of the eighteenth century. We have not yet, for instance, spoken of Pope, the most eminent of them all.

Louisa. Pray let him be the subject of conversation to-night.

Mr. Allen. What say Frederic and Edmund to this?

Frederic. That it will at all times afford us pleasure to accord with the wishes of Miss Irwin; and, if you please, I will begin. ALEXANDER POPE, the "prince

of rhyme," as he has been sometimes styled, was the son of a wealthy Roman Catholic linen-draper, and born in Lombard-street, London, in the year 1688. From his birth his constitution was feeble and delicate; and his disposition peculiarly mild and amiable. The first rudiments of his education were obtained from an aunt, who, at an early age, taught him to read. The art of writing he acquired in a very singular manner, also through her directions, by copying printed books; and this he was able to do, all his life afterwards, with extraordinary skill and dexterity, though his usual hand, as may be imagined, from such a mode of teaching, was far from elegant. When about eight years of age, he was placed under the care of a Roman Catholic priest, who instructed him in the rudiments of the Greek and Latin languages at the same time; a method that has not often been practised.

Louisa. Was he a quick scholar?

Frederic. Yes; the elements of classical literature he imbibed with the utmost facility; and, on perusing the poets, he is said to have discovered at once the peculiar bent of his inclination and the excellence of his own genius.

Edmund. After he had received considerable improvement under his private tutor, he was sent to a seminary of Catholics, at Twyford, near Winchester; but was taken away on account of a lampoon which he wrote on the master. This was one of his first efforts in poetry.

Frederic. And yet, from comparing the various accounts of his childhood, he could not, at that time, have been more than ten years old.

Lady Irwin. Poor little fellow! What became of him afterwards?

Frederic. He was sent to a school near Hyde-park-corner. The master of this school sometimes permitted his boys to go to the theatres; and Pope became so much delighted with theatrical representa-

tions, that he determined to form the chief events of Homer's Iliad into a kind of play. This was made up of speeches from Ogilby's translation of that work, connected by verses of his own. He persuaded the upper boys to act it. The master's gardener represented the character of Ajax; and the whole company attired themselves, as nearly as they were able, according to the prints in Ogilby's book.

Louisa. It must have been an extraordinary production. If it has been printed I should very much like to read it.

Mr. Allen. As a specimen of early talent it must have been a great curiosity; but it was probably destroyed not long after it was thus performed.

Edmund. We are told that Pope, instead of deriving advantage from either of the schools he had been at, was so unfortunate as to lose much of the knowledge he had previously acquired. In consequence of this, his father, who had now retired from business, and who lived at Binfield, in Windsor-forest, took him home, and placed him under the tuition of another Catholic priest; but still with so little advantage, that when only twelve years of age, Pope was permitted to pursue his own plan of study. With this view he read nearly all such books as he could procure, but with a decided preference to poetical works, particularly those of Dryden, who soon became his favourite author, and whose writings he subsequently adopted as the model of his own.

Lady Irwin. Is it known how young Pope was when he wrote the earliest of his pieces?

Mr. Allen. His "Ode to Solitude," is believed to have been originally composed when he was twelve years of age; but Dodsley, the bookseller, who lived in intimacy with him, says he had seen pieces of still earlier date than this.

Frederic. At fourteen he employed himself in some of those translations and imitations, which are inserted

in the first volume of his works. About this time he likewise wrote a comedy and tragedy; and he confesses that he thought "himself the greatest genius that had ever lived."

Lady Irwin. For what profession was he educated?

Mr. Allen. It is said that his father had recommended to him the study of physic; as he considered that the deformity of his person, and his feeble constitution, would render him unfit for any other. But this could not have proceeded beyond a recommendation; for he had such entire confidence in the abilities, and correct conduct of his son, as to allow him to choose any course, which he considered best suited to himself: Pope, consequently, was a poet from the commencement to the end of his life; and his father had the satisfaction of living long enough to see him begin to make an honourable fortune by the profession of poetry alone.

Frederic. His "Essay on Criticism," which was originally written before he was twenty years of age, elevated him to the first rank among the English poets. The public, it is said, were astonished to find, in one so young, such a knowledge of the world, combined with so much maturity of judgment, such extent of reading, and such facility of illustration, as are there displayed.

Edmund. But even the Essay on Criticism was surpassed, in celebrity, by his "Rape of the Lock," published about two years afterwards.

Louisa. What was the origin of this poem?

Sir Charles. It was occasioned by a frolic of gallantry, in which Lord Petre, during a party of pleasure, ventured to cut off a favourite lock of the hair of Mrs. Arabella Fermor. This familiarity was so much resented as to occasion a serious rupture between the two families. Mr. Caryl, secretary to the queen of James the Second, a friend of both parties, requested Pope to write something which might show the absurdity of the quarrel, and terminate the animosity that

had been excited. He readily assented, and, in the course of a fortnight, completed his design. The offended lady was delighted with the delicacy of the compliment thus paid to her. She first communicated copies of it to her friends, and subsequently prevailed with the author to allow it to appear in print. It was accordingly published; and, having been received with general applause, Pope, in the ensuing year, enlarged it by the addition of three cantos, comprising the machinery of the sylph. These he wrought with such exquisite skill and beauty, as to place the Rape of the Lock in a rank far above all the mock heroic poems that had ever been published.

Frederic. Induced by the success which had attended the translation of Virgil, by Dryden, and probably also by a desire to rival that work, Pope, in the twenty-fifth year of his age, commenced a verse translation of Homer's Iliad. This he completed, and published by subscription, at the price of six guineas. Its success far exceeded his expectation; for it has been shown to have yielded him the clear sum of more than five thousand three hundred pounds! and, by the translation of the Odyssey, subsequently published, he is said to have gained about four thousand three hundred pounds more.

Lady Irwin. These were large sums to have been obtained by one work. Few other poets, I should imagine, have been so successful.

Mr. Allen. The success of Pope, it is to be feared, may have induced many to imagine the writing of poetry a ready way both to wealth and fame; but, of those who have tried it, there are few indeed who, in the end, have not found themselves deceived.

Edmund. Is there not a notion, sir, that Pope was unequal to the task of translating Homer from the original Greek; and that he derived considerable aid from the Latin, French, and English versions of that work which were then extant?

Mr. Allen. A great clamour on this subject was raised at the time. It is possible that Pope, in consequence of his irregular education, was not a good Greek scholar, yet there can be no doubt but he had a competent knowledge of the language, for the completion of what he undertook. His work, however, as Dr. Warton has observed, is too highly ornamented. "No two things can be so unlike as the Iliad of Homer, and the Iliad of Pope. To colour the images, to point the sentences, to lavish Ovidian graces on the simple Grecian, is" (he says,) "to put a bag wig on the fine busts of the venerable old bard."—But we must proceed with his history.

Frederic. Out of the money which Pope obtained from the Iliad, he purchased a house at Twickenham, on the bank of the Thames, about ten miles west of London. Thither he removed, with his father and mother, in the year 1715.

Sir Charles. The taste that he afterwards displayed in improving this residence, became an object of general admiration, and continued so for near a century; but, in the year 1807, the house was pulled down, and the grounds, from the many alterations they have since undergone, can no longer be associated with the taste and skill of their once celebrated owner.

Frederic. In relating the history of this great poet, I must not omit to mention an accident, by which he had nearly lost his life. He was returning home in a friend's chariot, when, on passing a bridge, the carriage was overturned, and, with the horses, thrown into the river. As the glasses were up, and he was unable to break them, he would no doubt have been drowned, had not the postilion come to his relief, and carried him to the bank. A fragment of the broken glass, however, wounded his hand so deeply, that he lost the use of two of his fingers ever afterwards.

Sir Charles. The success which had attended the writings of Pope, excited the jealousy of many of the minor poets of the day, and of numerous others, who

assailed him from all quarters. But, after a patience of nearly ten years, he determined to crush his adversaries in a mass by one strong and decisive blow. This he accomplished in a well-known satirical poem, entitled the "Dunciad," which first appeared in 1727.

Lady Irwin. I have heard the religious opinions of Pope censured; and some persons assert, that the tenets contained in his celebrated "Essay on Man," are more favourable to natural than to revealed religion.

Mr. Allen. The whole scheme of this poem was drawn up by Lord Bolingbroke, in a series of propositions which Pope was to amplify, versify, and illustrate. It has even been asserted that it was wholly composed by Bolingbroke, in elegant prose, and that Pope did no more than turn this into verse. We are assured that Bolingbroke highly approved of it; and his opinions were certainly not very favourable to revelation. Voltaire also applauded it. There can be no doubt that several of its passages are so expressed as to be favourable to the doctrines denominated fatalism and necessity, notwithstanding all the pains that can be taken, and the artful turns that have been given, to place them on the side of religion, and make them coincide with the fundamental doctrines of revelation. The opinion that man is in a fallen and degraded state, is strongly denied in almost every line of the Essay on Man.

Frederic. Betwixt the time when this poem was published and his death, Pope wrote several short pieces. He even printed a collection of his familiar letters, to counteract a spurious edition which had previously been published. Not long after this his health declined, and he suffered much from a severe asthmatic complaint, constant headachs, anc incessant rheumatic pains. At last he sunk into an almost helpless state of decay, which terminated in his death, on the thirtieth of May, 1744, and the fifty-sixth year of his age. His body was deposited, according to his

own request in a vault, in the church of Twickenham, which contained the remains of his parents.

Louisa. Was not Mr. Pope very much deformed?

Sir Charles. In person he is described to have been protuberant both behind and before; and to have been so low of stature that, to bring him on a level with common tables, it was necessary to raise his seat. But his countenance was animated, and his eye remarkably piercing. From the contraction of one side of his body, and the general feebleness of his frame, he could scarcely hold himself upright; he therefore, very pardonably, wore stays. Under a coarse linen shirt, with fine sleeves, he wore a fur doublet; and, to enlarge the bulk of his legs, had three pair of stockings. These, as he was unable either to dress or undress himself, were drawn on and off by his maid-servant. Sickly, fretful, and impatient, he was always extremely troublesome to the servants of those families whom he visited; but he did not neglect to compensate their attention by pecuniary rewards.

Louisa. What was the general character of Pope? was he not exceedingly parsimonious?

Sir Charles. His love of money is described rather to have been an eagerness to obtain, than a solicitude to keep it; for he was by no means illiberal, either in loans to his friends, or in contributions to relieve distress. Pope's chief faults seem to have been a susceptibility of offence, and a disposition strongly inclined to revenge; but these had a powerful overbalance of virtues; for one of his most intimate friends asserted that, "he had never known a man who had a more tender heart for his friends, or a more extended friendship for mankind in general." One part of his character is peculiarly pleasing. I allude to his filial piety. In this, as Dr. Johnson has observed, he was in the highest degree amiable and exemplary. His parents had the happiness of living till he was at the summit of his poetical reputation, at ease in his fortune, and without a rival in fame; and they found no dimi-

nution either of his respect or tenderness. Whatever was his pride, to them he was obedient; and whatever his general irritability of disposition, to them he was gentle. And life has, among its soothing and quiet comforts, few things better to bestow than such a son.

Lady Irwin. Pope, I know, was a Roman Catholic during a considerable part of his life; and, if I recollect, continued such until his death.

Mr. Allen. Immediately before his death, he was prevailed with to receive the sacrament from a Popish priest; yet, when in the full possession of his intellect, he had too clear and solid an understanding not to discern the gross absurdities of the Romish superstition. And he once acknowledged to Dr. Warburton that, he was convinced the church of Rome had all the marks and signs of that antichristian power and apostacy, which are so strongly described and predicted in the New Testament.

It now only remains to be observed, concerning his works, that they were collected, and published, with notes, by Dr. Joseph Warton, in nine volumes, octavo, 1797. This collection comprises not only his poetry, but also his prose works, consisting chiefly of short essays, and his letters.

THIRTY-FOURTH EVENING.

It was remarked by Frederic, that several of our poets had already been mentioned under the heads of general writers, and divines. He alluded, particularly, to *Addison*, *Swift*, *Goldsmith*, *Watts*, and *Sir William Jones*. To these he thought there would be no necessity to revert, as the discussions would, thereby, not only be unnecessarily lengthened, but would involve much repetition. He consequently proposed the omission of all further notice of them; and said he would, this evening, introduce the poet Thomson.

Louisa expressed great delight that her chief favourite of the English poets should now become the subject of attention; and hoped she might be allowed to partake in the debate respecting him. This was immediately assented to by all, and Sir Charles requested her to begin; which she did as follows:

JAMES THOMSON was the son of a minister of the church of Scotland, and born at Ednam, in Roxburghshire, on the eleventh of September, 1700. To his mother, who possessed uncommon natural endowments, he was indebted for much valuable instruction during his childhood; and for much of that religious sentiment, which subsequently contributed, in no small degree, to the excellence of his poetry. After the usual course of school education, Thomson was sent to the university of Edinburgh, to prepare himself for the church.

Edmund. It would, no doubt, have been highly gratifying to his pious and excellent parent, if his studies had terminated by his entrance into the sacred profession. But this was prevented by an accidental occurrence respecting one of his early compositions. The professor of divinity had given him, for the subject of an exercise, the illustration of a psalm celebrating the power and the majesty of God. His paraphrase of this psalm was in itself truly excellent, but in a style so highly poetical, that all the auditors were astonished with it. The professor complimented him upon the performance, but added, with a smile, that, "if he thought of being useful in the ministry, he must keep a stricter rein upon his imagination, and express himself in language more intelligible to an ordinary congregation."

Frederic. Thomson, disheartened by this complimentary reproof, determined no longer to think of divinity as his profession; but, having received some encouragement from a lady of quality, a friend of his mother, then in London, he resolved to go thither,

though without any settled plans for his future subsistence.

Mr. Allen. And he was one of the few literary adventurers who have not been unsuccessful.

Louisa. When Thomson first arrived in London, he was about twenty-five years of age. He had recommendations to several persons of distinction. These he tied up carefully in his handkerchief; but, as he passed along the street, with the gaping curiosity of a new comer, his attention was upon every thing rather than his pocket.

Edmund. The consequence of which was, that his magazine of credentials was stolen from him.

Louisa. Poor man! And with them it may be presumed most of his other valuables; for we find that, soon afterwards, he was in want both of shoes and clothing. He would, no doubt, have been in great distress, had he not found some kind friends who relieved his necessities.

Frederic. In the beginning of the ensuing year, Thomson ventured to publish his "Winter." The bookseller gave him a very small sum for the copyright; and the slowness of the sale was such, that he was disposed to regret even that.

Mr. Allen. But Mr. Whately, a man of taste and learning, by his strong recommendations, brought it into universal notice and admiration.

Louisa. It was a happy circumstance for Thomson that, at this time, he was introduced to the Lord Chancellor Talbot, who gave him the situation of secretary of briefs. This, I understand, was a place of little duty or attendance, suited to Thomson's retired mode of life, and affording an income sufficient for his moderate demands. He afterwards accompanied the son of the chancellor, as his tutor, in a tour through Europe; but, previously to setting out on this excursion, he published his other three Seasons; first "Summer," then "Spring," and last of all "Autumn."

Edmund. At the suggestion of several of his friends, he wrote a tragedy called "Sophonisba," which was acted in the year 1729; and of which Dr. Johnson has said, it had raised such expectation, that every rehearsal was dignified with a splendid audience, collected to anticipate the delight that was preparing for the public: but it was observed that no one was much affected, and that the company always rose from it, as they would have done from a moral lecture.

Sir Charles. Slight accidents will sometimes operate upon the taste of pleasure. There is, as Dr. Johnson has observed, a feeble line in the play.

"O Sophonisba, Sophonisba, O!"

This gave occasion to a jocular parody:

"O Jamie Thomson, Jamie Thomson, O!"

which for a considerable while echoed throughout London; and which, absurd as it may seem, might have operated much to the injury of its author, had he not previously obtained great popularity by his other works.

Louisa. During his excursion on the continent, with Mr. Talbot, Thomson experienced a heavy affliction in the death of this amiable youth; and shortly afterwards an irreparable loss, in that of his father, Lord Talbot.

Frederic. These were serious events to the fortune of the poet, for he soon found himself reduced from a means of comfortable support, to a state of precarious dependance. Either through pride, modesty, or ignorance, Thomson neglected to ask the succeeding chancellor, to continue him in his office of secretary of briefs; and, after a little delay, it was given to another person.

Edmund. Although his chief dependance now was upon his own exertions, the loss did not operate upon his spirits. After paying a tribute of grief to the memory of his departed benefactor, he resumed his natural vivacity; and the profits arising from the sale of his works, together with the liberality of new

patrons, particularly of Frederic Prince of Wales, who generously allowed him a pension of a hundred pounds a year, he was enabled not only to live in a respectable manner himself, but also occasionally to assist the narrow circumstances of his sisters.

Louisa. That was liberal; and his being able to give this assistance, affords some proof, that he could not have been either dissipated or extravagant. Among his subsequent writings, were the tragedies of "Agamemnon," and "Tancred and Sigismunda," both of which were acted with considerable success; his masque of "Alfred," composed by command of the Prince of Wales, and "Castle of Indolence," an allegorical poem.

Frederic. The latter was dedicated to Lord Lyttleton; who, soon afterwards, procured for Thomson the place of Surveyor-general of the Leeward Islands, worth about three hundred pounds a year. His death occurred not long subsequently to this, on the twenty-seventh of August, 1748. It was occasioned by a violent fever, the consequence of a neglected cold, caught by going in a boat, after he had overheated himself by walking. Thomson was buried in the church of Richmond; and, in 1762, a monument was erected to his memory in Westminster Abbey, the expense of which was defrayed by the profits arising from a splendid edition of his works.

Louisa. You have mentioned Milton's favourite season for writing: that of Thomson was the autumn. And the deep silence of the night was the time which he commonly chose for his studies. He was frequently heard walking in his study till near morning, humming over what he had to correct and transcribe on the ensuing day.

Sir Charles. Do you recollect what were the favourite amusements of Thomson?

Louisa. He chiefly employed his leisure hours in reading civil and natural history, voyages, and travels; and, had the place of his residence been favourable to

them, he would no doubt have been partial to all innocent kinds of rural pursuits. Though he did not play upon any musical instrument, he was passionately fond of music; and he had an exquisite taste in the arts of painting, sculpture, and architecture.

Frederic. Pray, Mr. Allen, what do you think of his works?

Mr. Allen. Of all descriptive poems which I have read, that of his "Seasons," is the most excellent. Thomson's mode, both of thinking and expressing his thoughts, is perfectly original. He had a feeling heart, and a warm imagination; and had studied and copied nature with care. Enamoured of her beauties, he not only described them correctly, but felt their impression with strong sensibility. The impression which he felt, he transmits to his readers; and no person of taste can peruse any of his Seasons, without having the idea and feelings which belong to that season recalled, and rendered present to his mind. The gaity of spring, the splendour of summer, the tranquillity of autumn, and the horror of winter, take, in their turn, possession of his mind. But what I peculiarly admire is that, the devotion of the author to the Supreme Being, founded on the most elevated and just conceptions of his operations and providence, shines through almost every page of the work.

THIRTY-FIFTH EVENING.

Edmund. The next poet in succession to Thomson, of whom I have been able to discover any memoranda that are sufficiently interesting for our purpose, is Dr. Edward Young, the author of "Night Thoughts," and the son of Dr. Young, afterwards Dean of Sarum. He was born at Upham, in Hampshire, in the year 1681; and educated first at Winchester, afterwards in New College, and subsequently to this, in Corpus

Christi College, Oxford. The president of the latter, out of regard to his father, and, in order to lessen his academical expenses, invited him to reside at the lodge.

Lady Irwin. It has been said that, early in life, he was not that ornament to religion and morality which he afterwards became.

Mr. Allen. If this ever were the case, which indeed seems very doubtful, it must have been when he was very young; for we are told that, whilst at All Souls' College, of which, after leaving Corpus Christi, he was elected fellow, he displayed so much animation and ability in the cause of religion, that Tindal, a noted deistical writer, who passed much of his time in that college, was accustomed to say; "The other boys I can always answer, because I always know whence they have their arguments, which I have read a hundred times; but that fellow, Young, is continually pestering me with something of his own."

Sir Charles. Considerable prejudices were afterwards entertained against Young, in consequence of his having been patronized by the Duke of Wharton, certainly one of the most dissolute men that ever lived; but this was long after the period to which Lady Irwin alludes, and when his principles must have been firmly established.

Frederic. Whilst we are speaking of the early life of this celebrated man, I must be permitted to relate an anecdote which exhibits a lively trait of his character at the time. He was accompanying some ladies in a boat to Vauxhall; and, having a flute with him, he played to them several tunes, and then put the instrument into his pocket. An officer, rowing near, declared that if he did not continue his music, he would throw him into the river. To calm the apprehensions of his party, he complied. Having, however, marked his man, he privately addressed him in the garden, and insisted upon satisfaction. It was agreed that they should meet the next morning. They did so.

The officer drew his sword; and Young produced an immense horse-pistol, with which he threatened to shoot his antagonist through the head, if he did not now, in return for the music, dance a minuet. The delinquent, after many fruitless remonstrances, did as he was ordered.

Mr. Allen. And it is said, he had the good sense afterwards to acknowledge, that his impertinence had received an appropriate castigation.

Louisa. Was not Dr. Young a clergyman? and yet he wrote some tragedies. It does not seem to me quite correct, that a clergyman should be a writer for the stage.

Frederic. He was the author of "Busiris," the "Revenge," and another tragedy, called the "Brothers;" but these were all written before he was in holy orders. Indeed Mr. Young was not ordained until he was more than forty years of age; and it is observable, concerning the tragedy of the Brothers, that, having been only under rehearsal at the time of his ordination, he had the good sense to withdraw it; and this play remained in his desk five and twenty years.

Sir Charles. He, however, at last suffered it to be performed.

Frederic. True, but for a charitable purpose; and the profits derived from it, he made up, out of his own purse, to the sum of one thousand pounds; and gave this to the society for propagating Christian knowledge.

Edmund. Before Mr. Young was in orders, he was appointed tutor to Lord Burghley; and had been a candidate to represent the borough of Cirencester, in parliament, but was unsuccessful.

Frederic. He was presented by his college to the rectory of Welwyn, in Hertfordshire; and, soon afterwards, married Lady Betty Lee, widow of Colonel Lee, and daughter of the Earl of Litchfield, a lady of excellent talents, and most amiable disposition.

Lady Irwin. I have been informed that Dr. Young

was a very popular preacher; and that he was much followed, both on account of the grace and animation of his delivery.

Frederic. Yet we are told that, one Sunday, as he vainly endeavoured to rouse the attention of his audience at St. James's, where he was preaching as chaplain to the king, he was so much affected, that his pity for their folly got the better of his sense of decorum; and, that throwing himself back in the pulpit, he burst into tears.

Lady Irwin. This must have been a very mortifying circumstance to him.

Mr. Allen. You have, as yet, said little respecting his publications.

Edmund. His satires, entitled the "Love of Fame, or the Universal Passion," were printed some time after he was in orders, and in separate parts, in a folio size. They were so well received, that he is said to have cleared by them, in the whole, more than three thousand pounds, including two thousand pounds presented to him by the Duke of Grafton. But by far the most celebrated work that Dr. Young wrote, was his "Night Thoughts."

Lady Irwin. Do you recollect the origin of that work?

Edmund. I am not aware of any thing particular concerning it.

Frederic. It was commenced immediately after the death of his wife, to whom he had been sincerely attached. He has himself stated, in the preface, that the occasion of it was real, and not fictitious.

Mr. Allen. With respect to the characters mentioned in this poem, Narcissa is said to have been his daughter-in-law, and Philander to have been Mr. Temple, the gentleman whom she married. There is a notion that his own son was intended by Lorenzo; but this could not have been the case, as he was only eight years old when the work was written. It is possible that Young might have had the Duke of Wharton in mind at the

time: in other respects, Lorenzo is believed to have been a fictitious character.

Sir Charles. Dr. Young, after this, published a work in prose, with the extraordinary title of the "Centaur not fabulous." In explanation of this title he says that, "The men of pleasure, the licentious, and profligate, are the subject of these letters: and in such, as in the fabled centaur, the brute runs away with the man; therefore I call them centaurs. And further, I call them centaurs not fabulous, because by their scarcely half human conduct and character, that enigmatical and purely ideal figure of the ancients is not unriddled only, but realized."

Frederic. It has been asserted that Dr. Young was never cheerful after the death of his wife; but this has been attributed to other causes than that, and particularly to a disappointment of higher preferment in the church than he obtained.

Mr. Allen. One would imagine this impossible with a person whose mind was so well regulated as that of Dr. Young appears to have been. When this circumstance was mentioned to Dr. Johnson, he naturally replied, that, "it was not becoming in any man to have so little acquiescence in the ways of Providence, as to repine because he had not obtained so much preferment as he expected."

Frederic. In the early part of his life Young seems to have had nothing gloomy in his disposition; and indeed was celebrated for his wit, and the general brilliancy of his conversation. Dr. Warton describes him to have been one of the most amiable and benevolent of men. He also says, that, in the variety and novelty of his bon mots and repartees, Young was far superior even to Voltaire.

Mr. Allen. But his turn of mind, late in life, was certainly much otherwise than cheerful. When at home in the country, he would pass many hours of the day, walking in his own church-yard, among the tombs. His conversation, and his writings, had all

now reference to a future life; and this turn of disposition mixed itself even with his improvements in gardening. He had, for instance, an alcove with a bench near his house; and so painted, that, at a distance, it looked like a real one. But, when the spectator approached it, the deception was perceived, and this motto appeared, *Invisibilia non decipiunt.* "The things unseen do not deceive."

Sir Charles. A few years before the death of Dr. Young, his eye-sight in a great degree failed him. In a letter to a friend, written when more than eighty years of age, he says, "My sight is so far gone, as to lay me under the necessity of borrowing a hand to write this. God give me grace, under this darkness, to see those great things with which you and I must soon be acquainted. There is not a day of my long life that I desire to repeat; and at fourscore it is all 'labour and sorrow.' What then have we to do? But one thing remains; and in that one, blessed be God! by his assistance, we are sure of success. Let nothing, therefore, lie heavy on your heart: let us rely on Him, who has done great things for us; that lover of souls, that hearer of prayers, whenever they come from the heart, and sure rewarder of all those who love Him, and put their trust in his mercy."

On another occasion, in conversation with Dr. Cotton of St. Alban's, respecting Bishop Newton's publication on the prophecies, Dr. Young expressed himself on the subject of religion thus: "My friend, there are two considerations upon which my faith in Christ is built as upon a rock. The fall of man, the redemption of man, and the resurrection of man (the three cardinal articles of our religion) are such as human ingenuity could never have invented, therefore they must have been divine. The other argument is this: if the prophecies have been fulfilled (of which there is abundant demonstration) the Scripture must be the word of God; and if the Scripture be the word of God, Christianity must be true."

This excellent man closed his pious life, about three years afterwards, on the fifth of April, 1765, in the eighty-fourth year of his age; and was buried in the church of Welwyn, under the communion table.

Mr. Allen. Nothing I believe now remains but to speak of the writings of Dr. Young. With respect to his poems, which are by far the most popular of the whole, it is, as Dr. Johnson has observed, difficult to give any general character; for they have no uniformity of matter, nor any great resemblance to each other. Young began to write early, and continued long; and, at different times, had different modes of poetical excellence in view. In his "Night Thoughts," the most important of all his works, he has exhibited a wide display of original poetry, varied with deep reflections and striking allusions; a wilderness of thought, in which the fertility of fancy scatters flowers of every hue, and of every colour. This is one of the few poems in which the blank verse could not be changed for rhyme, but with disadvantage. The wild diffusion of the sentiments, and the digressive sallies of imagination, would have been compressed and restrained by confinement to rhyme. The excellence of this work is, not exactness, but copiousness: particular lines are not to be regarded, the power is in the whole; and, in the whole, there is a magnificence like that ascribed to a Chinese plantation, the magnificence of vast extent, and of endless diversity."

THIRTY-SIXTH EVENING.

Frederic Montagu observed, that all the poets hitherto mentioned, had, in some degree, possessed the advantages of a good education; but, that such advantages had been almost wholly denied to Robert Burns, the Ayrshire poet. At the time of his birth, in 1759, his father had filled the humble station of gardener,

to a gentleman who resided near the town of Ayr, in Scotland: and, having had a large family, it was not without great pecuniary inconvenience, he could afford to send them even to a village school, to be taught to read and write.

It was remarked by Mr. Allen, that the history of Burns was a singular, an interesting, and instructive one. He said, that his father was not long a gardener, but that he subsequently had rented a small farm.

Lady Irwin. May I ask whether Burns, when a child, had not an extraordinary escape from the falling of his father's cottage upon him in a storm?

Frederic. He had a very extraordinary one. His brother Gilbert thus describes it:—"When my father built his clay biggin, he put in two stone-jambs, as they are called, and a lintel, carrying up a chimney in his clay gable. The consequence was, that as the gable subsided, the jambs remaining firm, threw it off its centre; and, one very stormy morning, when Robert was nine or ten years old, a little before daylight, a part of the gable fell out, and the rest appeared so shattered, that my mother, with the young poet, had to be carried through the storm to a neighbour's house, where they remained a week, till their own dwelling could be adjusted."

Louisa. The parents of Burns must have been very poor indeed, to have lived in such a cottage as this.

Frederic. But, though poor, they do not seem to have been discontented. Burns was a strong and hard working lad; and was soon useful to his father in driving the plough, and attending the farm. At the age of thirteen he even assisted in threshing the corn; and at fifteen was his father's principal labourer.

Louisa. Poor boy! How had he time to acquire any knowledge?

Frederic. His father did his utmost to instruct his children himself, after the labour of the day was over. He taught them arithmetic, by their solitary evening

candle; and he borrowed for them some useful books, among which were Salmon's Gazetteer, Derham's Physico and Astro Theology, and Ray's Wisdom of God in the Works of Creation.

Mr. Allen. And he did not omit to impress upon their youthful minds, the principles of piety and virtue.

Lady Irwin. This must have been an interesting sight. A parent struggling against poverty, and yet exerting every effort to instruct his children, and render them valuable members of the community, is deserving of admiration.

Frederic. Burns has related of himself that the two first books he ever read in private, and that yielded him more pleasure than any he ever read afterwards, were the "Life of Hannibal," and the "History of Sir William Wallace." That of Hannibal, he says, gave his young ideas such a turn, that he used to strut in raptures up and down, after the recruiting drum and bag-pipe, and wish himself tall enough to be a soldier; while the story of Wallace poured into his veins a Scottish prejudice, which, he said, "would boil there till the flood-gates of life shut in eternal rest."

Edmund. He was so desirous to obtain knowledge that, when somewhat more than thirteen years of age, his father was induced to board him for about three weeks with his former village schoolmaster, that he might perfect himself in English grammar, and attain such a knowledge of the French language, as that short time would allow.

Sir Charles. And so great was his industry that, after a fortnight's instruction, he was able to translate almost any easy book from that language into English.

Lady Irwin. Burns may be pardoned a little vanity and affectation, the consequence of this ready attainment of a foreign language. I have heard that he piqued himself so much upon it, as to affect French

phrases in conversation, when even his own broad Scotch dialect would have served him much better.

Mr. Allen. A somewhat ludicrous anecdote has been related respecting one of his early attempts to speak French. When he was in Edinburgh, he happened to call at the house of a lady, who had been educated in France, and found her conversing with a French woman. Burns was determined to try his powers. His first sentence was meant to compliment the foreigner on her apparent eloquence in conversation; but, mistaking the idiom of the language, he made her understand that she was too fond of hearing herself talk. The French woman, highly incensed, replied, that she believed "there were more instances of vain poets than of talkative women." And Burns was obliged to use his own language in appeasing her.

Lady Irwin. This reproof, I dare say, was not thrown away upon him.

Mr. Allen. In relating my story I have taken you somewhat out of the order of time; for nothing has yet been said respecting the poetical talents of Burns.

Frederic. These were not conspicuous very early; nor, indeed from his situation in life, and probably his total ignorance of the writings of other poets, could such be expected. He has himself said that it was, when about sixteen years of age, he "first committed the *sin of rhyming*;" and it was not until long after this that he became known to the world as a poet. He continued at his agricultural labours; contriving, by degrees, to attain a knowledge of mensuration and geometry. He also made an attempt to learn Latin; and had even a few lessons at a country dancing school.

Edmund. At length, in his twenty-third year, he began to feel anxious to do something in life for himself.

Louisa. Now am I in doubt which he would be most inclined to do; to turn farmer, or depend on his poetry for a subsistence.

Edmund. My dear Louisa, he did neither. He became a flax-dresser. But this was an unlucky affair. His business failed; and, to finish his misfortune, as he and some jovial friends were giving a welcome carousal to the new year, his shop took fire, and was burnt to ashes; and he, like a true poet, was not worth a sixpence. He consequently was obliged to give up this scheme.

Frederic. He had soon afterwards to lament the loss of his father; who, having taken a larger farm, found it unproductive, became embarrassed in his circumstances, and died in great distress. When his father's affairs were somewhat arranged, the family took a farm amongst them, and Robert said to himself, "Come go to, I will be wise." He read farming books, calculated crops, and attended markets; and might have succeeded, but want of patience and perseverance overset him, and he gave up his share of the farm to his brother.

Louisa. What next did he do?

Frederic. His next resolution was a wild one, I am sure you will say. He determined to try his fortune on the other side of the Atlantic. He made what little preparation was in his power for a voyage to Jamaica; and, for want of money to pay for his passage, had actually comtemplated the project of indenting himself as a servant. As he had written several poems, however, he resolved to publish these before he went. This he did; clearing by them about twenty pounds. He then went on board a vessel destined to the West Indies.

Louisa. I never before heard that Burns had, at any time, left his native country.

Frederic. Nor did he. His poems were unexpectedly successful. A second edition was called for; and instead of sailing for Jamaica, he now hastened to Edinburgh with all imaginable expedition, to superintend and publish this edition.

Louisa. Let me here ask you, Frederic, whether Burns was not a man of very dissipated character?

Frederic. Till after he was twenty-four years of age, his brother, Gilbert Burns, asserted, that he did not recollect him ever to have been intoxicated, nor was he at all addicted to drinking. His manners were, simple, manly, and independent; and strongly expressive of conscious genius and worth.

Mr. Allen. At this time Burns appears to have had a due sense of religion; an ingrained piety and virtue, as he himself termed it, which, for several years, kept him within the line of innocence. And he invariably expressed a deep regret at the levity with which he occasionally heard religion treated in some convivial meetings that he frequented.

Sir Charles. Burns has himself said, that the great misfortune of his life was to want an aim. No regular and profitable occupation of his time was pointed out to him. Hence, at length, he was led to enter into dissipation. At the plough, the scythe, the reaping-hook, he says, he feared no competitor; and thus set absolute want at defiance. This notion tended to render him more careless respecting the future than he might otherwise have been.

Mr. Allen. At Edinburgh, where he was universally flattered and caressed, he was induced to enter into many parties devoted to social excesses; and he gradually acquired baneful habits. It is true that he saw his danger, and at times formed resolutions to guard against it; but he had embarked on the tide of dissipation, and was borne along its stream, without being able to stem the torrent.

Lady Irwin. How far did the publication of his poems prove eventually beneficial to him?

Frederic. It is stated that, on settling accounts with his bookseller, in February 1788, Burns found himself possessed of a clear sum amounting to nearly five hundred pounds. Two hundred pounds of this he

advanced to his brother Gilbert, who had taken upon himself the support of his aged mother, and was struggling with many difficulties in the management of his farm.

Louisa. And in what manner did he employ the remainder?

Frederic. With that, and some subsequent profits from his poems, he determined to settle himself for life in the occupation of agriculture. With this design he took a farm, on the banks of the river Nith, six miles above Dumfries. He built a house upon it, with his own hands; and having, some time before, married a young woman to whom he had long been attached, he settled there with his family.

Edmund. But, Frederic, you have forgotten his appointment to the situation of an exciseman.

Frederic. I have so. Previously to taking this farm, Burns had been recommended to the notice of the board of excise; and he had entertained an expectation that he should be called into service in the district in which his farm was situated; and that he should thus have been able to unite the labours of two businesses that were not, certainly, very compatible with each other.

Louisa. I should like to have seen Burns and his family at their farm.

Sir Charles. Many others besides yourself, my dear Louisa, have been desirous of this gratification. In the summer of 1791, we are told that two English gentlemen, who had previously been in company with Burns at Edinburgh, called at his farm. They inquired for him at the house, and were informed that he had walked towards the banks of the river. Mrs. Burns invited them to alight from their horses, which they did; and they proceeded in search of him. At some distance from the house, and on a rock that projected into the stream, they saw a man employed in angling. His appearance was singular. On his head he had a cap made of a fox's skin: he wore a loose great coat, fas-

tended round his body by a belt, from which hung an enormous Highland broad sword.

Louisa. What an extraordinary neighbour Burns must have had, in this man.

Sir Charles. It was Burns himself. He received them with great cordiality, and invited them to share his humble dinner; an invitation which they gladly accepted. The table was furnished with boiled beef, vegetables, and barley-broth, of which they partook heartily. After dinner, the bard told them, ingenuously, that he had no wine to offer, and nothing better than a bottle of the Highland spirit called whisky. This Mrs. Burns placed on the table. Burns, at the same time, produced a punch-bowl made of Inverary marble; and, mixing the spirit with sugar and water, filled the glasses, and invited his guests to drink. The travellers declared themselves in haste, and that they found the flavour of the whisky not very suitable to their palates; but the generous poet offered them his best, and his ardent hospitality they found it impossible to resist. Burns was in his happiest mood; and the charms of his conversation were altogether fascinating. He ranged over a great variety of topics, illuminating whatever he spoke of. He related the tales of his infancy and youth: he recited some of the gayest, and some of the tenderest of his poems. In the wildest strains of mirth, he threw in occasional touches of melancholy, and spread around him the electric emotions of his powerful mind. The whisky improved in its flavour, the marble bowl was again and again emptied and replenished. The guests and the poet all forgot the flight of time, and the dictates of prudence: the travellers left him at midnight, lost their road in returning to Dumfries, and, even when the morning dawned, could scarcely discern their way.

Louisa. Entertaining as this meeting may have been both to Burns and his guests, I fear such late and dissipated hours, must have rendered him very unfit for business the next day.

Frederic. Burns is said to have been chiefly injured by the distraction of his attention between his two businesses of exciseman and farmer. The consequence of this was, that, notwithstanding the uniform prudence and good management of Mrs. Burns, and though his rent was very moderate, he found it necessary to resign his farm after having occupied it about three years and a half. It was now his determination to subsist on the emoluments of his office, which amounted to about fifty pounds a year. He acquitted himself so much to the satisfaction of the board of excise, that he was appointed to a new district, the emoluments of which were about twenty pounds a year more than those of the last. In consequence of this appointment he removed, in 1791, to Dumfries.

Mr. Allen. It ought to be remarked that, hitherto Burns, though addicted to excess in social parties, had abstained from the habitual use of strong liquors; and that his constitution had not as yet suffered any permanent injury from the irregularities of his conduct. But, in Dumfries, the temptations to dissipation continually presenting themselves, his irregularities grew at length into habits.

Sir Charles. Many allowances are to be made for Burns. His engagements in the excise led him into temptations: his great celebrity rendered him an object of interest and curiosity to strangers; and few persons, of cultivated minds, passed through Dumfries, without attempting to see him, and enjoy the pleasure of his conversation. As he was unable to receive these under his own roof, he was invited to the inns in the town, and such interviews often terminated in excess.

Frederic. But there was another circumstance which tended to the injury of Burns. This was an independent spirit which, in a man like him, ought, I think, to have been admired.

Edmund. The spirit, which Frederic so much ad-

mires, would probably have led him to support the Pretender, and to seek the exclusion of the present royal family from the throne.

Frederic. I will say then, it might have been overlooked or excused. But information respecting some unguarded expressions that he had used in private conversation, was sent to the board of excise, and it was only by the interposition of a steady and powerful friend that he was prevented from being totally ruined by the loss of his place.

At last, in the winter of 1795, his constitution having been broken by disappointments, cares, and irregularities, he fell into a premature decline; and in July of the following year, he was seized by a fever which, on the fourth day of its continuance, terminated in death. He was then only in the thirty-eighth year of his age.

Mr. Allen. Burns furnishes an instance, in addition to those I have mentioned of the premature death of a poet and a man of talent, owing, in a great degree, to irregularity and dissipation; though certainly, in his case, many allowances are to be made, which cannot be claimed for most of the others. He left a widow and four sons, for whom a subscription was opened, which produced a considerable sum. This was afterwards augmented by the profits of a splendid edition of his works, printed in four volumes, and edited by Dr. Currie, of Liverpool.

Lady Irwin. I think Burns, with indeed some exceptions of coarse and indelicate sentences, a very delightful poet. His productions abound in humour, tenderness, and sublimity. Without accomplishing any work of extensive or complicated design, he has certainly, according to my judgment, exhibited all the variety of poetical powers which can enter into the greatest works, the conduct of a plan only excepted. But I must lament that his best performances are in a language that is now accounted barbarous, is never employed in serious writing, and is gradually falling into disuse.

Mr. Allen. To this it must be replied, that during many years of his life, that was the only language in which Burns was able to express himself fluently. His early thoughts were conveyed in it, and it was endeared to him by the pleasures of memory and association. But many of his more serious poems are written in English. And, notwithstanding the interruption of reading his Scottish poems, by the constant necessity of referring to a glossary, they have been read, studied, and admired in England, in Ireland, and in America, to a great extent.

THIRTY-SEVENTH EVENING.

AFTER a desultory conversation, for some time, on various subjects connected with literary history, Edmund Irwin began the life of WILLIAM COWPER, the poet. He said, that he had been the son of a clergyman of the Church of England, the rector of Berkhampstead, in Hertfordshire, and born in that town, in the year 1731. He further remarked, that, from his infancy, Cowper had been of peculiarly delicate habit, both of mind and body; and that his mother had died when he was only six years of age.

Lady Irwin. This loss, to such a child, must have been a very serious affliction indeed. Maternal attention, during his infancy, might have tended, in a degree, at least, to counteract those nervous affections which, in after life, were the cause of the most melancholy unhappiness to him.

Edmund. Cowper felt the loss at this time the more severely, because, delicate as he was, he was taken immediately from the nursery, and sent to school.

Louisa. Here I sincerely pity him. He has himself related that, at this school, he had numerous hardships to contend with; and that he felt these the more sensibly, in proportion to the tenderness with

which he had been treated at home. But he describes his chief affliction to have arisen from his having been singled out from all the other boys, by a lad about fifteen years of age, as a proper object upon whom he might let loose the cruelty of his temper. Cowper does not recite any of the acts of barbarity with which he says this boy made it his business continually to persecute him; but, in general terms, observes that, by his savage treatment, he had impressed such a dread of his figure upon his mind, that he well remembered being afraid to lift his eyes upon him higher than the boy's knees; and that he knew him by his shoe-buckles, better than any other part of his dress.

Frederic. This circumstance proved so distressing to Cowper, that it was a considerable relief to his mind to be taken from the school, at eight years of age, on account of having specks on both his eyes, which threatened to cover them, and render him blind for ever. He was now placed, for two years, in the house of an oculist, but to no purpose. Thence he was sent to Westminster school; where, at the age of fourteen, he says, the small-pox seized him, and proved the better oculist of the two, for it completely delivered his eyes from the specks, though it left them very tender.

Lady Irwin. Cowper was subject to weakness and inflammations in his eyes, in a greater or less degree, all his life.

Frederic. At the age of eighteen he was articled to a solicitor for three years. Concerning this period, he says, in one of his letters, "I did actually live three years with Mr. Chapman, a solicitor, that is to say, I slept three years in his house; but I lived, that is to say, I spent my days, in Southampton-row (at a relation's). There was I, and the future Lord Chancellor (Thurlow,) constantly employed, from morning to night, in giggling, and making giggle, instead of studying the law."

Mr. Allen. Yet, with all this apparent cheerfulness,

and, with every advantage, natural and acquired, which might have tended to his advancement in public life, Cowper was afflicted with a shyness and timidity of disposition so excessive, that it restrained him from intercourse with any, except the society of a few friends, among whom he could act without restraint.

Frederic. How distressing then must have been his sensations, to be compelled to prosecute his studies in a profession, so opposite to what his own desires might have led him to adopt. He became a student in the Temple; and amused his leisure hours in writing poetry, and in writing occasional papers, for the Connoisseur, and other periodical publications.

Sir Charles. Cowper continued in the Temple about twelve years: by which time, his patrimony was much diminished, and he began to fear that he should never be able to repair the loss by a fortune of his own acquiring; and to entertain some apprehension of approaching want.

Frederic. He might, however, have had a very eligible situation, if his extraordinary diffidence had not prevented him from filling it. The place of reading clerk of the house of lords, became vacant, and Cowper was appointed to it. He was at first rejoiced in the appointment; but, soon afterwards, the formidable danger of reading in public, which he considered next to that of speaking in public, occurred to his mind; and he resigned it. Immediately after this his friends procured him the place of clerk of the journals of the house of lords; and hopes were entertained that his personal appearance in parliament might be dispensed with. Some circumstances, however, occurred, which rendered it necessary for him to appear at the bar of the house of lords, there, publicly, to entitle himself to it. After a preparation of several months, the day at length arrived; and no description appears equal to the agonies which Cowper experienced during the preceding night. He has detailed some particulars of attempts to destroy himself, which he considered to have been prevented by an especial interposition of Providence.

Edmund. In a sketch that he drew up of his own life, he expresses himself in these remarkable words: "They, whose spirits are formed like mine, to whom a public exhibition of themselves is mortal poison, may have some idea of the horrors of my situation: —others can have none." His terrors, on this occasion, utterly overwhelmed his reason. The very friends who called upon him for the purpose of attending him to the house of lords, acquiesced in the cruel necessity of his relinquishing a situation so severely formidable to a frame of such singular sensibility. It was found necessary to remove Mr. Cowper to St. Alban's, where he resided a considerable time under the care of an eminent physician.

Frederic. You speak of his malady as though it had seized him immediately after he had been compelled to resign his situation in the house of lords. But this does not appear to have been the case; for, though he was dreadfully depressed by melancholy, he continued some time afterwards in London.

Edmund. He did so; and he has given a very distressing account of the state of his mind during that period. He says, that "he never went into the street, but he thought the people stood and laughed at him, and held him in contempt; and that he could hardly persuade himself, but the voice of his conscience was loud enough for every one to hear it. He thought that those who knew him seemed to avoid him; and that, if they spoke to him, they seemed to do it in scorn. He once bought a ballad of a person who was singing it in the street, because he thought it was written on himself. He dined alone, either at a tavern, where he went in the dark, or at a chop-house, where he always took care to hide himself in the darkest corner of the room. He slept generally an hour in the evening, but it was only to be terrified in dreams. He reeled and staggered like a drunken man. The eyes of men he could not bear; but when he thought that the eyes of God were upon him," (which he describes himself to have felt assured of) "it gave him the most intolerable anguish."

Mr. Allen. The insanity of Cowper, though, perhaps, more immediately occasioned by the shock which his mind had now received, seems to have been at least partly induced by religious despondency. He had long imagined himself in a state of reprobation. At St. Alban's, however, he gradually recovered from this malady; and his mind began to receive comfort from religion.

Louisa. May I interrupt you for a moment to ask how Mr. Cowper was now supported; for Sir Charles has said that, while he was in the Temple his patrimony was nearly exhausted.

Mr. Allen. He had yet part of his patrimony left, and he held the office of a commissioner of bankrupts; but, conscious of his inability to perform the duties of this office, he resigned it, after he left St. Alban's, and thus reduced himself to an income scarcely sufficient for his maintenance.

Edmund. From St. Alban's he went to Huntingdon. Here he became acquainted with the Rev. Mr. Unwin, and his family; and, after a little while, was admitted into his house as a boarder.

Mr. Allen. How far the routine of life at Mr. Unwin's may have been adapted to Cowper's peculiar frame of mind, may perhaps be collected from his own account of it. "We breakfast commonly between eight and nine," says he, in a letter to his kinswoman, Mrs. Cowper. "Till eleven we read either the Scripture, or the sermons of some faithful preacher of those holy mysteries. At eleven we attend divine service, which is performed here twice every day; and from twelve to three we separate, and amuse ourselves as we please. During that interval, I either read in my own apartment, or walk, or ride, or work in the garden. We seldom sit an hour after dinner; but, if the weather permits, adjourn to the garden, where, with Mrs. Unwin and her son, I have generally the pleasure of religious conversation till tea-time. If it rains, or is too windy for walking, we either converse within doors,

or sing some hymns of Martin's collection; and, by the help of Mrs. Unwin's harpsichord, make up a tolerable concert, in which our hearts are the best and most musical performers. After tea we sally forth in good earnest. Mrs. Unwin is a good walker, and we have generally travelled above four miles before we see home again. When the days are short, we make this excursion in the former part of the day, betwixt church-time and dinner. At night we read, and converse as before, till supper; and commonly finish the evening, either with hymns or a sermon; and last of all the family are called to prayers."

Cowper was an inmate in this family about a year and half, when Mr. Unwin was killed by a fall from his horse. In October, 1767, about three months after this calamity, Mrs. Unwin the widow, her daughter, and Cowper, removed to Olney, in Buckinghamshire; where they were induced to reside by the Rev. Mr. Newton, then the curate of that place, whose religious principles corresponded with their own.

Sir Charles. During his residence at Olney, the former malady of Cowper returned upon him. He sunk into such severe paroxyms of religious despondency, that he required an attendant of the most gentle, vigilant, and inflexible spirit. Such an attendant was Mrs Unwin, whom he professed to love as a mother, and who incessantly watched over him for nearly eight years. At length his mind broke through its long eclipse; and, in the summer of 1778, he was sufficiently recovered to meditate the execution of those works which have since been so highly and deservedly esteemed by the public.

Frederic. Cowper first became known as an author, in his fiftieth year; by the publication of his first volume of poems. For the suggestion of his principal poem, the "Task," printed in his second volume, he was indebted to Lady Austen, the widow of Sir Robert Austen, who, about this time, resided at Olney.

She had requested of him to write another poem. Cowper complained of the difficulty of finding a subject. Lady Austen replied, "You can be in no want of a subject; you can write upon any thing. You can write, for instance, on the subject of the sofa you are now lying upon." Cowper adopted the idea, and though he probably at first meant his poem to be a mock heroic effusion, he soon left the insignificant object from which he started, to expatiate over the wide field of moral sentiment and picturesque description.

Edmund. For the idea of the ballad of John Gilpin, he was indebted to the same lady. One afternoon, she observed Cowper more melancholy and dejected than usual; and as, on such occasions, she used to try all the resources of her sprightly powers for his relief, she now told him the story of John Gilpin, which she had treasured in her memory from childhood. Its effect on the fancy of Cowper had the air of enchantment. He informed her the next morning, that convulsions of laughter, brought on by his recollection of her story, had kept him awake during the greatest part of the night, and that he had turned it into a ballad. Mrs. Unwin sent a copy of this ballad to one of the newspapers, where Henderson, the player, saw it. He, conceiving that it might display his comic powers, read it at Freemasons'-hall, in a course of entertainments given there. It afterwards became popular among all classes of readers, but was not generally known to be Cowper's, till it was added to his second volume.

Mr. Allen. It is a somewhat singular circumstance respecting Cowper, that dejection of spirits, which may have prevented many a man from becoming an author, made him one. He found employment necessary; and, therefore, took care to be constantly employed. Having tried many manual occupations, he did not find that these sufficiently engaged his mind; but he found that composition, especially verse, absorbed it wholly. It was, therefore, his general prac-

tice, when in health, to write three hours every morning; and, in an evening, to transcribe what he had written.

Frederic. But Cowper's greatest literary undertaking was yet to appear; I mean his translation of Homer into blank verse. He had, for many years, been employed upon this work; and, in the hope of adding something to an income which had always been small, resolved to publish it by subscription.

Edmund. While thus engaged, he removed, in November, 1786, from Olney to Weston, about two miles distant; where the house provided for him was more sequestered and more commodious than that in which he had previously lived.

His Homer appeared in July, 1791, in two volumes in quarto; and was so well received, that it was nearly out of print in the course of six months.

Sir Charles. Yet, after all the labour he had employed, and all the anxiety he had experienced respecting it, this work fell so short of the expectation that had been formed by the public, and of the perfection which he hoped it had attained, that, instead of a second edition, he began, at no great distance of time, what may be termed a new translation.

Mr. Allen. One of the greatest advantages which Cowper derived from his translation of Homer was, the renewed conviction, that labour of this kind was necessary to his health and happiness. His revisal of it, appears solely to have occupied his leisure hours, during the year 1793. At this period his health, his comfort, and his little fortune, were all perishing deplorably; and his devoted friend, Mrs. Unwin, was fast hastening to the grave. The consequence of all which seems to have been that Cowper, in the ensuing year, relapsed into a state of mental derangement.

Sir Charles. During this, the king, through the interference of Earl Spencer, was pleased to confer upon him a pension to such an amount, as insured him an honourable competence for life.

Frederic. Unfortunately, Cowper was not in a condition to appreciate the value of this favour. He was now, and he continued, during nearly the whole remainder of his life, in a state of the most deplorable melancholy.

Edmund. In consequence of the illness both of Cowper, and Mrs. Unwin, it was found desirable to remove them from Weston; and they were taken to Dereham, where Mrs. Unwin died.

Mr. Allen. At this time, he was in a state, in which grief is neither exasperated by melancholy, nor alleviated by consolation; and he was mercifully relieved from feelings which neither religion nor reason could any longer regulate. Betwixt this period, and that of his own death, however, there were intervals in which he was able, with satisfaction, to apply himself to the revisal of his Homer. During these intervals, he also wrote a few original verses; and he occasionally amused himself with translations from Latin and Greek epigrams. The period of his own dissolution at length approached. In the month of February, 1800, he exhibited all the symptoms of a dropsy. This made a rapid progress; and, on the twenty-fifth of April, terminated his existence so silently, that, although there were no fewer than five persons in the room at the time, not one of them were conscious of the moment of his dissolution.

His remains were interred in the church of Dereham, where a marble tablet, with an inscription written by Mr. Hayley, was erected to his memory.

MISCELLANEOUS.

THIRTY-EIGHTH EVENING.

"FREDERIC and myself," observed Edmund Irwin, "are now desirous of introducing, in succession, a few individuals, eminent for genius, qualifications, and pursuits so various, that we are at a loss under what general titles to arrange them."—"If they are but few in number," replied Sir Charles "it is scarcely worth the trouble of perplexing yourselves on the subject: let them all be discussed under one miscellaneous head." Edmund thanked Sir Charles for the suggestion, and began with the first on his list, JAMES CRICHTON, a celebrated Scotsman, of whom, he said, so many wonderful things have been related, that he has received the appellation of "*the admirable Crichton.*"

Frederic. For my part, I would have recommended the omission of this gentleman altogether. He is noted for so many marvellous qualifications, that I am somewhat inclined to consider them all as fabulous.

Mr. Allen. Many circumstances certainly concur in throwing a suspicion over the boasted exploits of Crichton; but the celebrity that he has attained is such, that I should have been sorry if he had been omitted.

Frederic. And yet, sir, notwithstanding this celebrity, neither the time of his birth, nor of his death, are exactly known.

Edmund. He is believed to have been born in the year 1560. His father was Lord Advocate of Scotland, in the reign of Queen Mary, and resided at Elliock, in the county of Perth. His mother was a

Stuart, a lineal descendant from the kings of Scotland.

Lady Irwin. Where was he educated?

Edmund. First at Perth, and afterwards in the University of St. Andrew's. There can be no doubt, from his very extraordinary acquirements, (unless with Frederic Montagu, we are to believe them fabulous) that he had excellent instructors in every branch of learning. By the time he was twenty years of age, he had attained a knowledge of all the sciences taught in those times; he was able to write and speak no fewer than ten different languages; and had attained an astonishing proficiency in the accomplishments of fencing, riding, dancing, singing, and playing upon musical instruments.

Louisa. To have effected all this, he must not only have been a man of great genius, but of indefatigable application. He must also have had a very surprising memory.

Edmund. In addition to his various acquirements, the person and countenance of Crichton are described to have been eminently beautiful.

As soon as his education was completed, he set out upon his travels, and first arrived in Paris.

Frederic. Now for a commencement of the marvellous: pray what occurred there, Edmund?

Edmund. Do not, Frederic, I pray, treat his history so lightly. Conscious of the superiority of his attainments, and eager to display them to the world, he affixed, on the gate of the College of Navarre, a public challenge to all the celebrated men in Paris, to dispute with him, on that day six weeks, upon any subject connected with the arts and sciences; and in any of twelve languages, Hebrew, Arabic, Syriac, Greek, Latin, French, Italian, English, Spanish, Dutch, Flemish, and Sclavonian.

Louisa. Believing that such a paper could have been placed there only by a madman, or an impostor, I cannot imagine that any notice would be taken of it.

Edmund. Indeed, Louisa, you are mistaken; for no fewer than four doctors of the church, and fifty masters in different sciences, prepared to enter the lists against him.

Louisa. Crichton, doubtless then, must have very closely occüpied the intervening time in preparation for this grand dispute.

Edmund. No; conscious of his superior talent, he passed the greater part of the time in pleasure, and public amusements; so as even to render himself contemptible in the eyes of the students. But, on the day appointed for the contest, he soon redeemed his character. Three thousand auditors are said to have been present; and, after a disputation of nine hours, with his various opponents, he proved himself superior to them all. At length the president rose from his chair; and, after having highly extolled him for his many rare and excellent endowments, gave him a diamond ring, and a purse full of gold, in testimony of the favour and approbation of the college.

So little had Crichton been fatigued with this dispute, that on the ensuing day, he attended a tilting match at the Louvre; and, in the presence of some of the princes of the French court, carried away the ring fifteen times successively, and broke fifteen spears in striking a sort of mark called the Saracen.

Frederic. Oh! he was a prodigy in all the species of manly as well as mental exercises! In fencing, he could use the sword with equal dexterity in either his right or left hand: nay, we are told he could spring, at one bound, the length of twenty feet, and in that act, instantly disarm his antagonist!

Edmund. Frederic, I know, is perfectly incredulous respecting the proficiencies of Crichton; but I cannot accord with him.

From Paris, this extraordinary man went to Rome; where he fixed a placard on all the most public parts of that city (famous for its scholastic learning), that he would reply to any question proposed to him, without

his being previously informed what the question should be. He appeared at the time and place appointed; and, in the presence of the pope, and many of the cardinals, bishops, doctors of divinity, and professors in various sciences, displayed such wonderful proofs of knowledge, that he excited here no less surprise than he had done in Paris.

Frederic. So says your account, Edmund. But Boccalini, an Italian satirist, who was then at Rome, informs us, that Crichton was there ridiculed as an empiric, and left the city in disgust.

Edmund. The assertion of Boccalini, I believe, to have been occasioned solely by envy.

Crichton's next exhibition was at Venice, where he wrote a poem in praise of that city. This poem he afterwards presented to the Venetian literati. He also made a brilliant speech to the doge, and conducted several disputations, on literary subjects, with his usual success. From Venice he went to Padua. In the university there, which was then in the highest reputation, Crichton engaged in another literary contest. He began with an extemporaneous poem in praise of the place and of his auditors; and, after having disputed six hours, with the most celebrated professors, whom he foiled on every subject, he concluded with—

Frederic. An unpremeditated poem in commendation of ignorance! This must have been a very pretty terminating compliment to his opponents, as well as to the university that had educated them.

Edmund. Whatever it may have been, we are led to understand that it was conducted with such ingenuity and elegance, as to have astonished all his hearers.

The next account we have of Crichton, records an extraordinary instance of bodily skill and courage. There was at that time, in Mantua, a gladiator who, during his travels, had defeated nearly all the most celebrated fencers of Europe; and had lately killed, in Mantua, three persons who had entered the lists with

him. The duke began to regret that he had granted protection to this murderer. Crichton, informed of this, was fired with the ambition of ridding the world of so sanguinary a monster, and challenged him to fight for a purse of fifteen hundred pistoles. The challenge was accepted; and, every thing being prepared, the combat was exhibited before the assembled court, and an immense concourse of spectators. At the commencement, Crichton stood only on the defensive; while his adversary made his attack with such eagerness and fury, that, having over exerted himself, he began to be weary. Crichton now seized the opportunity of attacking him in return. This he did with so much vigour and dexterity, that he ran him through the body in three different places; and of these wounds he immediately died. Crichton then generously divided the money which he had won, among the widows of the three individuals whom the prize-fighter had slain.

Louisa. I hope the Duke of Mantua was grateful for this service.

Edmund. Astonished at the singular qualities, both of body and mind, which he had witnessed in this extraordinary man, he appointed him preceptor to his son.

Frederic. In return for which appointment, and to contribute to the amusement of his patrons, Crichton is said to have written a comedy, satirizing the various professions in which men are engaged; and to have himself acted fifteen characters of his own play. Really, Edmund, you must not expect me to believe all this.

Edmund. Such, however, has certainly been related of him, and by persons whose veracity has not generally been doubted. The time was now approaching in which it was proved that, with all his endowments, Crichton was no more than mortal. One night, during the carnival, as he was walking along the streets of Mantua, playing upon a guitar, he was assailed by several persons in masks. Having repelled their at-

tacks, and disarmed their leader, the latter pulled off his mask, and begged his life, as being the prince his pupil. On this discovery, Crichton fell on his knees, apologized for his mistake, and assured the prince that, if he had any design upon his life, he might take it whenever he pleased. He then took his own sword by the point, and presented it to the prince. This cowardly youth, irritated by the imaginary affront he had received, seized it, and barbarously stabbed him to the heart. The precise period of this event is not known; but it is generally believed to have taken place in the month of July, 1583, and in about the twenty-third year of his age.

Frederic. And can you imagine, Edmund, that all the surprising occurrences that you have mentioned, took place in the course of so short a time?

Edmund. I certainly can see nothing very improbable in them.

Mr. Allen. That such a person as Crichton actually existed, we cannot doubt; and there is equal evidence that he was a youth of such accomplishments, as to have excited great present admiration, and high expectation with respect to his future attainments. He had, doubtless, a fine person, was very adroit in bodily exercises, possessed a peculiar facility in learning languages, and enjoyed a quick and retentive memory: he may also have excelled in the power of declamation, and in readiness of reply. But we must recollect that it was no very difficult matter to astonish the learned pedants of the sixteenth century. He left behind him some literary productions, and these exhibit no marks either of genius or of taste. We may, therefore, consider the encomiums that have been bestowed upon him as certainly exaggerated; but, even with every due allowance for exaggerated praise, he must be considered one of the most accomplished youths that our country has ever produced.

THIRTY-NINTH EVENING.

In reference to the discussion which, on the preceding evening, had taken place respecting the singular attainments of James Crichton, Edmund Irwin said he was convinced that a retentive memory was as requisite to great proficiency, either in science or literature, as intense application. This induced a digression, respecting persons who had been remarkable for the strength of their memories. Bishop Jewel was again spoken of. Frederic mentioned Mithridates, King of Pontus, who, he said, ruled over twenty-four nations, and was acquainted with all their languages; and Quíntus Hortensius, the Roman orator, whose powers of mind were such that, having attended a whole day at an auction, he was able, at night, to recapitulate every article that had been sold, together with the prices, and the names of the purchasers in their proper order, without a single error. Sir Charles Irwin spoke of Lipsius, a French critic of the sixteenth century, who could recite the whole history of Tacitus.

"These examples," observed Mr. Allen, "are all, no donbt astonishing, but what has been related of Jedidiah Buxton, an illiterate English labourer, appears to me to exceed them all."

Frederic, Edmund, and Miss Irwin, all united in requesting that Mr. Allen would oblige them with some account of so extraordinary a person. He took from Sir Charles's library the fifty-first, fifty-third, and fifty-fourth volumes of the Gentleman's Magazine, to aid him in his narration, and proceeded as follows:

"The grandfather of Jedidiah Buxton was a clergyman, and his father a schoolmaster in the village of Elmeton, near Chesterfield, in Derbyshire; where Jedidiah himself was born, about the year 1704. It is singular that, notwithstanding the profession of his father, the education of Jedidiah should have been so totally neglected, that he was never able either to read or write.

"How he came first to know the relative proportions of numbers, their denominations, and powers, he could never remember; but, through life, his constant attention was fixed upon these; and he scarcely ever took notice of external objects, except with regard to their numbers. If any space of time was mentioned in his presence, he would, soon afterwards, say that it contained so many minutes; if any distance, he would assign the number of lengths of barley-corns, or hair-breadths in it, even when no question was asked him. His power of abstraction was so great, that no noise whatever could disturb him; and, when asked any question, he would immediately reply, and return to his calculation without the least confusion, or the loss of more time than the answer required.

"By his constant application to figures, Jedidiah had stored up, in his mind, several common products, to which he could have immediate recourse when necessary. These were the number of minutes in a year, of hair-breadths in a mile, and many others. When he once comprehended a question, he began to work with amazing facility: millions upon millions, tribes, cramps, and so on (for by these terms he enumerated his long series of numbers), were as plain and familiar to him, as pounds, shillings, and pence, are to other people.

"He would suffer two persons to propose different questions to him to be solved at the same time; and he would give to each his answer, without the least confusion. He would even recollect and repeat the answers a month or two afterwards. Indeed, his memory was so great that, he could leave off, and reassume the operation at the end of a week, a month, or at the end even of several months. He could call his figures all by their proper names, and was ready at naming them either backward or forward.

"His method of working was peculiar to himself, and was by no means either the shortest, or simplest that could have been devised. An example of it may afford you some amusement.

"Being requested to multiply 456, by 378, and to work it audibly, he proceeded thus. He first multiplied 456 by 5, which produced 2280; this he again multiplied by 20, and found the product to be 45,600; which was the 456 that had been proposed to him multiplied by 100. This product he multiplied by 3, which produced 136,800, or 456 multiplied by 300. It remained to multiply the last product by 78. To effect this, he multiplied 2280, (the product of 456 by 5) by 15, because 5 times 15 are 75; this product being 34,200, he added to the 136,800 (the product of 456 by 300) which produced 171,000, or 375 times 456. To complete the operation, he multiplied 456 by 3, which produced 1368; and, having added this number to 171,000, he found that the whole product required was 172,368.

"It thus appears that Jedidiah's method of arithmetic was entirely his own; and that he was so little acquainted with common rules, as to multiply 456 first by 5, and the product of that by 20, to find what sum it would produce multiplied by 100; whereas, had he added two cyphers to the figures, he would immediately have obtained the product.

"A person who had heard of Jedidiah's astonishing performances, was accidentally in company with him; and, desirous of trying his calculating powers, proposed to him the following question. In a body whose three sides measure 23,145,789 yards, 5,642 732 yards, and 54,965 yards, how many cubical eighths of an inch are there? After having distinctly named the several figures, to assure himself of the dimensions, this self-taught calculator commenced his operation. The proposer of the question left him for about five hours. He then returned, and found Jedidiah ready with his answer, which was perfectly correct, though it occupied a line of twenty-eight figures.

"Another person proposed to him the following: admit a field to be 423 yards long, and 383 yards wide, what is its area? After the figures had been

read to him distinctly, he gave the answer, 162,009 yards. This was done in two minutes, the proposer having noted the length of the operation by his watch. The same person asked him how many acres the same field measured? and, in eleven minutes, he replied 33 acres, 1 rood, 35 perches, 20 yards and a quarter. He was then asked, how many barley-corns would reach eight miles? In a minute and half, he replied, 1,520,640 barley-corns. He was asked, supposing the distance between York and London to be 204 miles, how many times will a coach wheel turn round in that space, allowing the circumference of the wheel to be six yards? In thirteen minutes he answered, 59,840 times. The next proposition was, if a tub or bin be 346 inches long 256 inches wide, and 94 inches deep, how many gallons of liquid measure, will it hold; and what quantity of corn? His answer was, 3,454,464 solid inches, or 1,768,685,568 half quarters of solid inches, making 12,249,872 gallons liquid measure, or 12,249, gallons, 3 quarts, and 34½ inches. He said that it would hold 191 quarters, 3 bushels, 3 quarterns, and a half quartern, with a small remainder. He was then asked, suppose a canal is to be dug 426 feet long, 263 feet wide, and two feet and half deep, how many cubical yards of earth must be removed? After pausing a quarter of an hour, he answered 10,373 yards 24 feet.

"He told the person who proposed these questions, that, from the seventeenth of May, 1725, to the sixteenth of June following, he was *drunk* with reckoning by his memory, after which he said he slept soundly for seven hours; but he added that, he would never again attempt so much, for fear of falling into a similar disagreeable situation. What he meant by being drunk was, that his senses were so much stupified as to render him for some time afterwards, incapable of his usual labour, or, indeed, of any business whatever. That this should have been the case will not appear wonderful, when we consider the question that engaged

his attention. It was this: in 202,680,000,460 miles, and each mile reckoned to be cubical, how many barley-corns, vetches, peas, wheat, oats, rye, beans, lintels, and hairs, each an inch long, would, respectively, fill that space; reckoning 48 hairs in breadth to measure an inch, on the flat?

"He was desired, by another person, to multiply thirty-six figures by the same thirty-six figures; which he did correctly. He was then asked, how many square yards were contained in Europe, on a given dimension of miles: this he also performed with great exactness. Jedidiah calculated the number of square hair-breadths that were contained in the parish of Balfour, in Derbyshire. But the question which exercised all his faculties, and was, as he declared, the hardest he had ever met with, was this, "What dimensions must be given to a joiner, to make a cubical bin, that shall hold just a quarter of malt Winchester measure?" Jedidiah sat down in intense thought: "there were," he said, "many nooks in it, but he would sift them about." He was surrounded by persons who did not cease from talking, but he sate regardless of every thing, except his pot of beer. He received no hints nor assistance of any kind; and, after about an hour, he said, it ought to be made a little more than twenty-five inches and three-quarters on each side, and that twenty-six inches would be too much; which was perfectly correct. This difficulty shows that he had never applied his thoughts to cube root.

"When any one asked Jedidiah to calculate a question, he would sit down, take off his old brown hat, and, resting upon his stick, which was generally a very crooked one, would set to work. All his exertions were those of his mind, for he never used a pen, chalk, nor any kind of marks. Sometimes he has been known to omit the cyphers in his calculations. This consequently deranged the whole of the other figures. He would then seem much displeased with himself; but, putting the fore-finger of his right hand

into the palm of the left, he never failed, after a little while, to set himself right.

"He believed himself able to recollect what quantity of ale and strong beer he had drank, at free cost, since he was twelve years of age; the places where, and the number of pints at each house. The whole amount, at a particular time that he mentioned, was five thousand one hundred and sixteen pints.

"This extraordinary man would stride over a piece of land, and tell the contents of it with as much exactness, as if it had been regularly measured. In this manner he measured the whole lordship of Elmeton, comprising several thousand acres; and he brought the contents, not only into acres, roods, and perches, but even into square inches. After this he reduced them, for his own amusement, into square hair-breadths, computing forty-eight to each side of an inch, which produced a most incomprehensible number.

"The only objects of Jedidiah's curiosity, except figures, were the king and royal family; and his desire to see them was so strong, that, in the beginning of the spring, 1754, he walked to London for that purpose; but was obliged to return disappointed, as his majesty had removed to Kensington, just as Jedidiah arrived. He was, however, introduced to the Royal Society, whom, in his country dialect, he called the "Volk of the siety court." The gentlemen who were present asked him several questions in arithmetic, all of which he answered; and they dismissed him with a handsome gratuity.

"During his residence in London, he was taken to see the tragedy of King Richard the Third, performed at Drury-lane Theatre; and, it was expected, that the novelty of every thing in this place, together with the splendour of the surrounding objects, would have fixed him in astonishment, or that his passions would have been, in some degree, roused by the action of the performers, even if he did not fully comprehend the dialogue. But in the playhouse Jedidiah's thoughts

were still employed on figures. During the dances, his attention was engaged in reckoning the number of steps. After a fine piece of music, he declared, that the innumerable sounds perplexed him beyond measure. With respect to the acting of Mr. Garrick, Jedidiah was only occupied in counting the number of words that he uttered during the whole entertainment; and, in this, he afterwards affirmed that he had perfectly succeeded.

"Jedidiah was a married man, and had several children; but whether any of these inherited their father's peculiar talent for figures is not known. He lived to the age of about seventy years, but the exact time of his death has not been mentioned."

Edmund. The abilities of this man were certainly very extraordinary. What a pity it is that proper attention was not paid to cultivate his mind in his youth; he might then, instead of having been a mere calculator of curious arithmetical problems, have been qualified to fill some highly distinguished and useful situation in life.

Mr. Allen. His whole time was passed in laborious poverty. Born to no fortune, and brought up to no particular profession, he supported himself entirely by labour. His manners and dress were extremely simple. He usually wore a linen or woollen cap on his head, and a handkerchief carelessly thrown round his neck.

Lady Irwin. At what period of life was it that his astonishing powers of calculation were first ascertained?

Mr. Allen. When he was a young man, and worked as a labourer, in the gardens of the late Duke of Kingston, at Thoresby, in Nottinghamshire. The principal gardener, a man well versed in figures, was told, by the fellow labourers of Jedidiah, that, although he was unable either to read or write, he could work many difficult sums of arithmetic in his head. In

consequence of this the gardener was induced to try him; and from his report it was that the abilities of Jedidiah were originally made public.

Lady Irwin. I am surprised that the consciousness of his own abilities, added to the flattering notice that was taken of him by persons of rank and eminence, did not render him discontented with his station, particularly after his visit to the metropolis.

Mr. Allen. Though endowed with powers of mind which raised him far above his humble companions, yet ambitious thoughts do not, at any time, appear to have interrupted his repose. Even on his return from London, he did not regret the loss of any thing he had left behind him. Fully satisfied with his rustic fare, and his own humble condition, he despised the luxuries of the great; and, while it was his chief pleasure to exercise his mind by calculation, he was still of opinion that a slice of rusty bacon afforded a delicious repast, and that a flock bed was a most comfortable place of repose.

FORTIETH EVENING.

Frederic, addressing himself to Mr. Allen, said, "Last night, sir, you amused us with some particulars relative to the life of a very remarkable self-taught arithmetician: Edmund Irwin and myself have been reading the memoirs of an uneducated man, whose genius for mechanical contrivances was as surprising as that of Jedidiah Buxton for arithmetical calculations; and, what is of more importance, has proved of permanent utility to the public." Miss Irwin eagerly enquired who this was. After Mr. Allen's account of Jedidiah Buxton she had been desirous of speaking of a man noted for his singular mechanical acquirements, and was fearful that Frederic had anticipated her design. Her fears, however, were imme-

diately removed, by his stating that the person to whom he alluded was JAMES BRINDLEY, a native of Tunstead, in the parish of Wormhill, Derbyshire; and that he had been a contemporary of Jedidiah Buxton, but about twelve years younger than he. To an inquiry made by Lady Irwin, relative to the parents of this person, Frederic replied, that his father had possessed a little freehold, but, that he gradually dissipated all his property by a fondness for shooting, and other field sports; and by keeping company with persons above his own rank in life.

Mr. Allen. That is, by entering into expenses, and indulging in pursuits, to which, he ought to have known, his means were not equal. Instances of this are too common. But what was the consequence as to his son? it must have been attended with some bad effects to him.

Frederic. The boy was so totally neglected, that he did not receive even the ordinary rudiments of education. He was compelled to labour for his own subsistence, as well as to contribute towards supporting the necessities of his family, at a time when he ought to have been employed in acquiring the elements of future improvement in letters or in science. Until he was nearly seventeen years of age, he was occupied in those kinds of labour which, in country places, are usually assigned to the children of the poor. He was then placed as apprentice to a millwright; and he soon became expert in that business.

Mr. Allen. When a young man, Brindley is said to have never been idle.

Edmund. I believe he seldom was, sir; for, although, in the early part of his apprenticeship, he was frequently left, during many successive weeks, to execute works that his master had given him instructions to prepare, these works he always punctually finished. Indeed so strong was his attachment to the mechanic arts, and so great became his skill in them, that his master was often astonished by the improvement

which, from time to time, Brindley introduced into the mill-wright business.

Lady Irwin. This must have gained him much credit in the neighbourhood, and eventually, no doubt, must have been of great service to him.

Edmund. Such was the case. All the millers were desirous of having their work done by him rather than by either his master, or any other workman.

Frederic. A singular instance has been recorded of Brindley's active and earnest attention to the improvement of mill-work. His master, having been employed to construct an engine paper-mill, the first of the kind that had been attempted in that part of the country, went to see one at work, as a model to copy after. Notwithstanding this, when he began to prepare the machinery, it was soon evident that he wanted talent to complete it. Brindley, sensible that he could not depend on his master for proper instructions, determined to visit the mill himself. Having finished his business one Saturday evening, he set out, travelled fifty miles on foot, viewed the mill, and returned in time for his work on Monday morning. He informed his master in what particulars he had been deficient, and himself completed the engine, to the entire satisfaction of his employers.

Louisa. That was admirable! though I think his master might have better spared him some other day for inspecting the mill than on Sunday. He should have taught him a due respect for the Sabbath.

Mr. Allen. It does not appear that the master had been informed of his intention of visiting the mill; it is said that Brindley did not previously mention the design to any one.

Louisa. I am very anxious to hear how Mr. Brindley succeeded after the term of his apprenticeship expired.

Frederic. He then engaged in the business of a mill-wright on his own account; and, by many useful inventions, advanced it to a higher degree of perfec-

tion than it had ever before attained. The consequence of this was, that his talents gradually became known even in distant parts; and he was employed, at different times, to erect some very extraordinary engines.

Edmund. His biographer states that, in particular, he erected a water engine at Clifton, in Lancashire, by which he obtained a very high degree of reputation. The intention of this engine was to drain the water from some coal mines, which had before been worked at an enormous expense. The water, for the use of the engine, was conveyed from the river Irwell, by a subterraneous channel, nearly six hundred yards in length. This was cut through a solid rock, and the water wheel was fixed thirty yards below the surface of the ground. After this Mr. Brindley erected, at Congleton, in Cheshire, a silk mill, more complete than any work of the kind that had ever before been attempted; and the potteries of Staffordshire were indebted to him for several important improvements in the mills there used for the grinding of flint stones. In the year 1756, he undertook to erect a steam-engine, on a new plan, near Newcastle-under-Line. But it would be an endless task to speak of all the useful contrivances in machinery, that were effected by the inventive genius of Brindley. These would have been more extensive than they were, had not his attention, about this time, been called to another object, which, in its consequences, has proved of the highest national importance.

Louisa. What was that, Edmund?

Edmund. The projecting and executing of canals for inland navigation, whence inestimable benefits have arisen to trade and commerce.

Sir Charles. It was a happy circumstance, both for Brindley and his country, that he was contemporary with a nobleman, the Duke of Bridgewater, whose scientific attainments and liberality were as distinguished as his rank.

Frederic. The duke had, at Worsley, about seven miles from Manchester, a large estate, rich with mines of coal. These had lain useless, solely from the expense of carriage. Mr. Brindley, who had become famous for his mechanical inventions, was consulted as to the possibility of cutting a canal, for the purpose of facilitating the conveyance of coals from these mines to Manchester. After an attentive survey, he pronounced the work, though difficult, to be practicable. The plan that was finally proposed, and for the execution of which an act of parliament was obtained in 1759, was to carry the canal over the river Irwell, near a place called Barton Bridge, to Manchester. After many difficulties had been surmounted, of sufficient magnitude to have deterred an ordinary man from the undertaking, the great labour remained: this was to carry the canal over the river, and at the height of thirty-nine feet above it. Though Brindley was confident of the practicability of this design, he wished his grace to take the opinion of some able engineer before the attempt was made.

Lady Irwin. And what, Frederic, was the opinion given?

Frederic. A gentleman was consulted. He replied that the scheme deserved no deliberation; that "he had often heard of castles in the air, but was never before shown where any of them were to be erected."

Lady Irwin. This, I fear, must have operated as a discouragement of the undertaking.

Frederic. It does not appear to have so operated; for neither Brindley's resolutions, nor the duke's confidence in him, were at all shaken by it. The aqueduct was begun in September, 1760, and in July following, the first boat floated along it.

Louisa. I have been informed that the Duke of Bridgewater's canal passed under ground for a considerable distance: you have not said any thing of that.

Edmund. Frederic has omitted it. The subter-

raneous tunnel to which you allude, is about three-quarters of a mile in length, and commences near Worsley-mill. It is sufficiently wide to admit the passage of long flat-bottomed boats; which are towed by hand-rails on each side, to the coal-works.

Mr. Allen. In some places the canal is continued, by arches, over public roads; and, where there is not sufficient height for a carriage, the road is lowered with a gentle descent, and ascends on the other side.

Louisa. It must appear very strange to see a boat pass along a canal, while waggons and horses are crossing it by a road underneath.

Frederic. Or, as at the river Irwell, to see a boat drawn along the aqueduct, at the height of thirty feet above another boat, which is floating in the river. In consequence of the success of this undertaking, the remainder of Mr. Brindley's life was chiefly employed in making surveys, and laying out canals.

Edmund. The most remarkable of all his undertakings appears to me to have been that which he called the Grand Trunk Navigation. This canal was conducted through a space of ninety-three miles, from the Trent to the Mersey; and thereby united the ports of Liverpool and Hull, the Irish sea with the German Ocean. It was completed in eleven years, was furnished with seventy-six locks, and conducted, by tunnels under ground, through five hills, one of which is 2880 yards in length, and upwards of seventy yards below the surface of the earth.

Sir Charles. The counties of Durham, Westmoreland, Lancaster, York, Chester, Stafford, Worcester, Warwick, Somerset, Devon, Hants, and Oxford, have all derived improvement and advantages, either from Mr. Brindley's surveys, plans, or superintendence of inland navigations. He was, on this subject, the greatest enthusiast that ever existed. Do you recollect an answer that he once gave respecting the utility of rivers?

Edmund and *Frederic.* No, sir.

Sir Charles. He was summoned before a committee of the house of commons, to be examined concerning some particulars relative to rivers; being asked, by one of the members, for what purpose he imagined rivers had been created? He considered a little while before he answered, and at last replied, "To feed navigable canals."

Lady Irwin. From the account you have given, it appears that Mr. Brindley's peculiar talents were, if possible, more remarkable than those of Jedidiah Buxton. You have said, that he was an uneducated man.

Edmund. Some persons have asserted that he could neither read nor write.

Mr. Allen. This is not true. He could certainly do both; though his writing extended to little more than a few occasional letters, and his reading appears to have been nearly as circumscribed as his writing.

Louisa. How then could he have formed his plans?

Frederic. By the exertion of his mental powers alone. When any extraordinary difficulty occurred, he generally retired to bed; and he has been known to lie there one, two, and even three days, till he has attained the object in view. He would then get up, and execute his design; and, unless his employers wished to see his plans delineated on paper, he always completed the work without either drawing or model. His memory, which was astonishingly retentive, and was never taught to distrust itself, and commit its possessions to paper, was in no danger of suffering any link in his mechanical arrangement to escape. Of this he was, from experience, so confident, that he has often declared, he could remember and execute all the parts of the most complex machine, provided he had time, in the survey of it, to settle in his mind, the several departments, and their relations to each other.

Edmund. There is reason to suppose that the intense application of Mr. Brindley to the various important

undertakings he had in hand, operated, at last, with so much injury to his constitution, as to bring on a hectic fever. This continued for some years, and, at length, terminated his life, on the twenty-seventh of September, 1772, and in the fifty-sixth year of his age.

Lady Irwin. He must have left many vast works incomplete. What became of these after his death?

Edmund. They were carried on and finished by his brother-in-law, Mr. Henshall; for whom he had always expressed a particular regard, and of whose integrity and abilities, in conducting such works, he had the highest opinion. Among them was the completion of the Grand Trunk Navigation; for Mr. Brindley died about five years after it had been begun.

FORTY-FIRST EVENING.

"Now," said Edmund Irwin, "it is my turn, to propose for discussion the life of a man of extraordinary genius." Miss Irwin, who, as already related, had been desirous of herself reciting some particulars relative to the life of a person who had been noted for extensive mechanical attainments, was again in alarm. "I do not pretend," continued Edmund, "that the person of whom I am about to speak, was, like Brindley, a man wholly uneducated. His father, having been an attorney in considerable practice, was enabled to afford him a respectable education." The fears of Miss Irwin, on hearing this, were again allayed. It was evident that her brother's description could not apply to the person whose life she had been contemplating. She, however, anxiously inquired who it was to whom he alluded? "To JOHN SMEATON," he replied, "the projector of many useful public works, but chiefly celebrated for having constructed a magnificent lighthouse, on the Eddystone-rock, in the English Channel."

Sir Charles. Where, and when was he born, Edmund?

Edmund. He was born at Austhorpe, a village, near Leeds, in Yorkshire, in the year 1724. During his childhood his whole delight was in mechanical amusements. Instead of playing with other boys, he chose to occupy his time with workmen's tools; and he made many infantine machines even while in petticoats. This turn was the more remarkable, as he cannot be supposed to have derived it from objects that were placed before him at that early period.

Frederic. While still a boy, we are told that he often surprised, and occasionally alarmed his friends, by mechanical efforts altogether disproportioned to his years. Sometimes he would be seen on the top of a building, erecting a mill; and sometimes at the side of a well, employed in the construction of a pump.

Louisa. Was he, in consequence of this decidedly mechanical turn, brought up to the business of an engineer?

Edmund. No: he appears to have been articled as a clerk to his father, and to have served the whole term of his clerkship with him; but his mind, notwithstanding this, was incessantly bent on mechanical studies. His leisure hours were occupied in pursuits wholly foreign to the profession of the law. A visitor at his father's house, in the year 1742, describes him, then at the age of eighteen, as a complete artificer. "He forged," says this gentleman, "his own iron and steel, and melted his own metal. He had tools of every sort for working in wood, ivory, and metals. He had made a lathe, by which he had cut a perpetual screw in brass, a thing little known at that day." His father, however, persevered in his legal education; and, in due time, sent him to London to attend the courts at Westminster. But the young man, sensible that he could never obtain success in the law, wrote to his father so strong a memorial on the subject, that he was thenceforward allowed to pursue the path which nature had pointed out to him.

Louisa. What were now his plans and pursuits?

Edmund. He had lodgings in Turnstile, Holborn; and, about the year 1750, commenced business, as a maker of mathematical and philosophical instruments. In the following year he invented a machine for measuring a ship's way at sea. He also communicated plans of several ingenious mechanical inventions to the Royal Society, and was elected a member of that body when about twenty-nine years of age.

Frederic. Mr. Smeaton made several improvements in water-mills, wind-mills, and other machines. After a long course of experiments he ascertained, in a satisfactory manner, that wind and water could do at least one-third more than had before been known. In 1754 he travelled into Holland, for the purpose of informing himself respecting the improvements that had been introduced into mechanics, in that country. By intense study he fitted himself for the profession which he afterwards followed, that of a civil engineer; and, in this particular branch, he exhibited the most extraordinary talents.

Louisa. My brother has said, that the Eddystone lighthouse was constructed by Mr. Smeaton. It will give me much pleasure to hear the account of his engagement in that building. I have often seen it from the ramparts at Plymouth. It is on an insulated rock, in the open sea, about fourteen miles from the shore.

Mr. Allen. There are so many important particulars connected with this lighthouse, anterior to Mr. Smeaton's engagement in it, that although, by so doing, we shall be led a little while from his history, I must request permission to relate to you a few of them.

The first lighthouse that was erected on the Eddystone rock, was constructed under the direction of a gentleman whose name was Winstanley. He was a man of singular character, and had previously distinguished himself by a peculiar turn for mechanics. He commenced the work in 1696, and completed it in about four years. The structure that he formed was

about eighty feet high. Notwithstanding this great elevation, so tremendous are sometimes the storms in this part of the sea, that the waves have been known to break more than a hundred feet over the top of the building; and at times the sea has covered more than half the side of the house as if it were under water. Three years after this building was completed, it wanted some repairs; and Mr. Winstanley went to Plymouth to superintend them. Previously to his going off with the workmen, some of his friends intimated to him a fear that the building could not long withstand the dreadful storms, to which, from its exposed situation, it was subject. This presumptuous man replied, "he was so well assured of its stability, that he should only wish to be in it during the most dreadful storm that ever blew under the heavens; that he might see what effect it would have." He was too fatally gratified in this presumptuous wish; for while he was there, with his workmen and the light-keepers, on the twenty-sixth of November, 1703, one of the most tremendous storms began that has ever been known in Great Britain. On the following day, when its violence was somewhat abated, many persons went anxiously to look out for the lighthouse; but not a fragment of it was left. Not one of the unfortunate people was ever afterwards seen. It was conjectured that the building was overset altogether; and that, in its fall, it had even torn up a portion of the rock itself, as far as the irons had been fastened into it.

Thus, unhappily, perished both Mr. Winstanley and his building. So long, however, as it had stood, its utility had been found incalculably great; and, consequently, arrangements were soon afterwards made for the erection of a new one. The person who now undertook it, was a Mr. Rudyerd, a self-taught mechanic, who kept a silk-mercer's shop on Ludgate-hill. Mr. Rudyerd's structure was of wood; upon a plan very different from the former; and, from the enormous strength of the timbers, was well calculated to resist

the fury of the waves. It was of somewhat conical shape, ninety-two feet high, and surmounted by a circular frame, with glass all round, so as to show the light on every side. This great work braved the fury of the elements for forty-six years; but was at last destroyed by fire. About two o'clock in the morning of the second of December, 1755, one of the three light-keepers that were stationed there went into the lantern to snuff the candles as usual, and was alarmed by finding it filled with smoke. On opening the door to enter it, a flame instantly burst from the inside of the cupola. He awoke his companions, but before they could reach the lantern, the fire had attained such strength, that all their exertions to subdue it were of no avail. The terror and dismay of these wretched men, on an insulated rock many miles from the land, and without any means of escape, were indescribable. In dreadful alarm, they retreated from the immediate scene of horror, into one of the rooms below; and they continued descending from room to room, as the fire, with increasing fury, advanced over their heads. Early in the morning, the conflagration was perceived by some fishermen in Plymouth Sound. They spread the alarm, and boats were immediately sent to the relief of the unhappy sufferers. They were discovered sitting in a hole under the rock, almost stupified with terror, and were all conveyed in safety to the shore; when one of them instantly ran off, and was never afterwards seen. Another, the man who had originally discovered the fire, had been dreadfully burnt, by a shower of melted lead which had descended upon him from the roof; and a portion of which, weighing nearly half a pound, had fallen into his mouth as he had been looking upward. He died about twelve days afterwards, and on opening his body, this portion of the lead was found in his stomach.

Lady Irwin. How dreadful an account! I have read that it was after this lamentable occurrence, that Mr. Smeaton was employed.

Edmund. He was recommended by Lord Macclesfield, then president of the Royal Society, as the fittest man in the country to construct another light-house. His lordship bore a strong testimony to his ability, by declaring that he had never known Mr. Smeaton undertake any thing in which he did not succeed, and to the perfect satisfaction of those who had employed him. Mr. Smeaton was, at that time, engaged on business in Scotland, but the importance of this great work induced him immediately to return to London. Thence he went to Plymouth, examined the plans on which the two former buildings had been erected, and afterwards proposed one of his own. The structure that he projected was to be of stone.

Louisa. I am glad to hear that. There could not then have been the same danger from fire as before.

Edmund. Certainly not; but his employers wished it to be again constructed of wood. They said that, with such materials, it would not only be cheaper, but would be less liable to injury from storms, than if it were of stone. Mr. Smeaton was of a different opinion, and they had the good sense not to oppose his judgment.

With respect to the shape of the stone work, or solid part of the structure, it appeared to him that the greatest degree of strength would be attained by forming it like the natural figure of the bole, or trunk of an oak; that is, of a circular shape, gradually tapering upward for some distance, and afterwards with its sides perpendicular. The next thing to be considered was, how the blocks of stone composing this mass were to be bonded, or fastened to the rock, and to one another. He determined not to cramp them together with iron, as is often done in large buildings, but to dovetail them; that is, so to shape the stones that, when built, they should lock one another closely together. And the first courses he fixed in a similar manner, deeply into the rock. It was also requisite to use such mortar

or cement for the joints of the stones as should not be affected by the water.

Louisa. As the building was to be of stone, it was a fortunate circumstance for Mr. Smeaton, that he could obtain it from the very rock on which it was to be constructed.

Edmund. This, Louisa, was not the case. Though there are three principal rocks at the Eddystone, yet that on which the lighthouse was to be erected, measures, at low water, only about twenty-two yards in length, and twelve in width. The stone adopted for the exterior of the building was granite, as being more durable than any other; and that for the interior was Portland stone. All this was wrought and prepared, on the shore near Plymouth, and conveyed to the rock in vessels adapted to that particular use.

The work was commenced on the thirty-first of July, 1756. The surface of the rock was levelled, and several of the steps, with their dovetails, were prepared before the setting in of the winter. The first stone for the building was landed, got into its place, and fixed on the twelfth of June, 1757, and, on the following day, the first course of stone-work was completed. On the fourteenth, the second course was begun; but, in consequence of a gale of wind, the workmen were compelled to quit the rock, after securing every thing as fast as possible. On the eighteenth they were again as suddenly driven from their work; and several pieces of the stone that had been landed, were washed away by the violence of the sea. The building proceeded, though its progress was retarded by various interruptions and accidents, till the latter end of August, when the seventh course was nearly finished. A violent storm then arose, which carried away the machinery for raising the stones, and even two of the largest of the stones themselves, which had been left chained on the rock! Notwithstanding these and various other difficulties, the ninth course was completed by the end of September. Having

now made every thing as secure on the rock as possible, the workmen were again obliged to desist for the winter.

Owing to various accidents in the beginning of the following year, 1758, the tenth course of stone-work was not completed till the fifth of July. From this time there was no material interruption; so that, before the end of September, the twenty-fifth course, or the first of what Mr. Smeaton denominated the superstructure, was finished.

During the early part of the year 1759, Mr. Smeaton was employed, in London, in forming and making out the necessary design for the iron rails of the balcony at the top; the cast iron, the wrought iron, and the copper works for what was called the lantern, together with the plate-glass work. On the fifth of July he landed on the rock, and found every thing perfectly sound and firm; but, on hauling up, from the store-room, the stones for the next circle, he had the mortification to find only seven instead of eight. It was imagined that a body of falling water had forced the stone that was wanting out of the store-room door, and washed it away; though it weighed betwixt four and five hundred pounds. The progress of the work, notwithstanding this disappointment, was very rapid. On the sixteenth of September, the frame of the lantern was fixed in its place; on the seventeenth, the cupola, which was to cover the lantern; and on the eighteenth, the gilded ball that was to surmount the whole, was screwed on. The latter operation was performed by Mr. Smeaton himself, and a very perilous one it seems to have been. Elevated upon almost a point, at an immense height above a tremendous sea, he was supported only by a scaffold consisting of four boards, so nailed together as to permit it to be lifted over the ball when done with. This little scaffold rested on the cupola, and was balanced by one of the masons, who placed himself on the opposite side of it, while Mr. Smeaton moved round to fix the screws.

Louisa. I can scarcely imagine a situation much more frightful. The very thought of it makes me giddy. I should think that nothing but a most anxious zeal for the success of his work, and a desire to be assured, from his knowledge of the fact, that every thing was perfectly secured, could have induced Mr. Smeaton thus to risk his life. This, I presume, was the finishing of the exterior of the building.

Edmund. It was. On the first of October the chandeliers were hung; twenty-four candles were put into their proper places, and lighted: and, though, during the whole time, it blew a hard gale of wind, they were found to burn perfectly well. On the sixteenth of the same month, the house was first lighted at night; and the light has been continued ever since. Thus, after innumerable difficulties and dangers, was a happy period put to this undertaking, without the loss of life or limb to any one concerned in it. The time that elapsed between the first stroke upon the rock, and the lighthouse being completed, was three years, nine weeks, and three days.

Mr. Allen. In this building Mr. Smeaton was peculiarly attentive to the comfort and accommodation of the light-keepers. In that constructed by Mr. Rudyerd, the bed-rooms had been formed in the lower part, and the kitchen at the top; and the beds were apt to be damp. In the present structure the chambers are contrived above the kitchen; the funnel for the smoke from which passes through them, and they are thus kept warm and comfortable.

Edmund. Mr. Smeaton, from this time, became a leading man in his profession, and was employed in most of the great public concerns of the nation, that were connected with the subjects of his peculiar study. He was often consulted in parliament, and frequently in the courts of law, on intricate questions of science; and his strength of judgment, perspicuity of expression, and strict integrity, always appeared, on these occasions, to the highest advantage.

Frederic. Like Brindley, he was frequently employed, in the latter part of his life, as an engineer in inland navigation. He gave the plan and survey for the navigable communication betwixt the Firth of Forth, and the Clyde. Mr. Smeaton was also employed as the engineer to the harbour of Ramsgate.

Edmund. His death was somewhat sudden. On the sixteenth of September, 1792, while walking in his garden at Austhorpe, he was seized by an attack of paralysis; and, remaining in a very infirm state, though in full possession of his faculties, he died on the twenty-eighth of the ensuing month, and in the sixty-ninth year of his age.

Lady Irwin. Has any account been given of the habits of Mr. Smeaton in domestic life?

Mr. Allen. Yes; his manners were simple, and his mode of living abstemious. In all the social duties of life he was exemplary; he was an affectionate husband, a good father, a warm, zealous, and sincere friend. He was a lover and encourager of merit wherever he found it; and himself singularly moderate in his pecuniary wishes. He had, it is true, a warmth of expression which, to those who did not know him, might appear to border on harshness; but those more intimately acquainted with him, knew that it arose from the intense application of his mind, which was incessantly engaged in the investigation of difficult subjects. Mr. Smeaton spent much of his leisure time in cultivating the science of astronomy, for which purpose he fitted up an observatory in his house, and furnished it with some curious instruments of his own contriving. As a companion, he was always both entertaining and instructive; and none could long be in his company without improvement.

A few years before he died, he wished, as much as possible, to withdraw himself from business, and to employ part of his leisure in drawing up and publishing an account of his principal inventions and works. The only part of this design that he completed was, a

folio volume, published in 1791, entitled, "A Narrative of the Building, and a Description of the Construction of the Eddystone Lighthouse." This work, which is illustrated with fine plates, and is that to which Edmund has been indebted for the account he has given, is one of the most curious and most interesting architectural productions in any language. After the death of Mr. Smeaton, his papers were purchased by Sir Joseph Banks, under a voluntary promise of accounting to his executors for whatever profits might arise from the printing of them. Three quarto volumes of his reports have, in consequence, been published.

FORTY-SECOND EVENING.

Louisa. I know not whether an unusual degree of anxiety may have been apparent in my conduct at the commencement of the conversations for the two last evenings.

Frederic said that he had remarked nothing further than a close attention to the subjects discussed; but Edmund recollected a peculiar eagerness in his sister's last night inquiring the name of the person of whom he was about to speak.

Louisa. The fact is this. I had been reading the life of Ferguson, the Scots mechanist and astronomer, and had stored in my mind most of the leading particulars of it. These I was desirous of being permitted to recite, in the same manner that Mr. Allen had spoken of Jedidiah Buxton; and was fearful that I might have been anticipated, first by Frederic, and then by Edmund. That, however, not having been the case, I will request to speak of him now.

Frederic replied that, he had certainly intended to propose the life of Ferguson for discussion; but that in this, as on every other subject, he should have great pleasure in giving place to his cousin.

Miss Irwin thus began:

"JAMES FERGUSON was born of indigent parents, at Keith, a small town in Bamffshire, Scotland, in the year 1710. His father had a large family; and could give his children no further education, than at his leisure hours to teach them himself, in a very humble way, to read and write. James, who showed early indications of extraordinary genius, learned to read by only looking over his brother from time to time, as he read aloud the Scots catechism. This he did without exciting the attention of any one; so that, some time afterwards, his father was astonished to hear him reading aloud by himself. His father then taught him to write; and determined to send him for three months, though he could ill afford it, to a grammar school at Keith. This was all the education that Mr. Ferguson ever received.

"When he was betwixt seven and eight years old, part of the roof of his father's house fell in; and a prop and lever were applied to raise it to its former place. The facility with which this was effected, so strongly excited his astonishment, that, young as he was, he was led to consider attentively the means by which it had been accomplished. He immediately began to construct levers, and soon indicated a peculiar taste for mechanics. By endeavouring to make a lever that would raise bodies to any height, he discovered another of the mechanical powers, the wheel and axle; and he contrived to make models of these and other machines, by means of his father's turning lathe, and a knife. He soon afterwards wrote out a little account of them, which he illustrated with rude drawings in ink. This he showed to a gentleman of the neighbourhood, imagining it to have been the first treatise of the kind that had ever been written; and was not a little astonished to find that the same things had been known long before. The gentleman lent him a printed book in which they were treated of; and the boy was much pleased to observe that, in many particulars, his

own account coincided with what he found inserted there.

"In consequence of his father's poverty, James was placed out to service, in the occupation of a shepherd. This was an employment that suited his disposition. Part of his night was now spent in studying the stars; while, in the day-time, he made models of mills, spinning wheels, and other machinery.

"After a few years he went into the service of a farmer, who was peculiarly indulgent to him. When his work was over, James was permitted to go into the fields with a blanket wrapped around him. Here, lying on his back, he would take the apparent distances of the stars, by a thread with small beads strung upon it. He used to stretch the thread at arms length before his eyes; then laying it on a paper, he marked the respective positions of the stars by the beads. His master at first laughed at this apparently ridiculous occupation; but as soon as he understood the object of it, he encouraged James, by every means in his power, to proceed.

"One day, being sent on an errand to the minister of Keith, James took with him what he called his star-papers. He found the minister occupied in looking over a large parcel of maps. They were the first that he had ever seen. The minister described to him the shape of the earth; told him that it was round, like a ball; and kindly explained to him the map of it. This map James begged permission to borrow, that he might copy it, in the evenings after his work was over. The minister readily lent it him; he also gave him a pair of compasses, a ruler, pens, ink, and paper; at the same time strictly enjoining of him not to neglect his master's business. His master, however, was so much pleased with his performances, that he would often take the threshing flail out of his hands, and work himself, while James was sitting beside him in the barn, busily employed with his pen, ruler, and compasses.

"On his return to the minister with the map he had borrowed, and the copy that he had made of it, James saw a man painting a sun-dial. He stopped a little while to observe him; and, proud of his performance, showed him the copy he had made of the map. He then went on to the minister's. While he and the minister were conversing, a neighbouring gentleman, whose name was Grant, came in. To this gentleman the minister introduced him, and showed his map. Mr. Grant was so much pleased with the boy, that he invited him to live with him. He said, if he would do so, his butler, Alexander Cantley, should give him a great deal of instruction. James, delighted with this invitation, gladly complied with it, as soon as the term of servitude with his master was expired.

"Alexander Cantley, the butler of Mr. Grant, proved to be the same person that James had seen painting the sun-dial. He was a very extraordinary character. Though entirely self-taught, he was a good mathematician, and a performer on every kind of musical instrument except the harp. He understood Latin, Greek, and French; and, on urgent occasions, was often applied to by the country people as a physician.

"Having received from this butler a present of Gordon's Geographical Grammar, James constructed a globe, from the description which is there given of it. And, having delineated upon his globe a map of the world, he was enabled to solve, by means of it, all the common problems in geography and astronomy. This globe, of his own making, was the first he had ever seen.

"Cantley proved a kind and attentive instructor; but, after a little while, he left Mr. Grant to live with the Earl of Fife; and James could not be prevailed with to continue when his friend was gone. He consequently went into the service of a miller, expecting that he should there have sufficient time to study decimal arithmetic and geometry; but his new master was so fond of drinking, that James had the whole care of

the mill upon himself. He was also nearly starved for want of food. To this inhuman master he was engaged for a year: and, at the end of that time, he returned, in a very weak state, to his father.

"As soon as he had somewhat recovered his strength, he entered the service of a person whose name was Young, and who acted in the joint capacity of farmer and physician. His chief inducement to this had been a promise, on the part of Young, that he would instruct him in medicine. His new master, however, proved as bad as the former. He never even showed him one of his books, and overwrought him to such a degree, that, at the end of three months, James was obliged to leave him, in a state of great debility, and without receiving any part of his wages. The inhuman doctor did not even give him medical advice; and it was only by medicines that were sent by his old friend Cantley, who lived twelve miles off, that he at last recovered his strength.

"During his illness, James, who had too active a mind ever to be idle, contrived to make a wooden clock, the hours of which were struck on the neck of a bottle instead of a bell. Some time afterwards, happening to see a gentleman ride past his father's house, he asked him what o'clock it was. The gentleman answered him with so much good nature, that James ventured to request he would show him the inside of his watch; as he could not imagine how it went without a weight and a string, similar to those of a clock. The gentleman kindly complied with his request. When James saw the spring-box, with part of the chain round it, he eagerly inquired what it was that made the box turn round. The gentleman, delighted with the inquisitive mind of a rough-looking country lad, told him it was turned by a steel spring that was within it. James could not immediately comprehend this; but the gentleman said to him: 'Well, my lad, take a long thin piece of whalebone, hold one end of it fast between your finger and thumb, and

wind it round your finger: it will then endeavour to unwind itself. And if you fix the other end of it to the inside of a small hoop, and leave it to itself, it will turn the hoop round and round, and wind up a string tied to the outside of the hoop.' James thanked the gentleman for his information, and told him he perfectly understood how the motion of the watch was caused.

"His whole mind was now bent on making a watch. This he at last effected, with wooden wheels and a whalebone spring. He enclosed the whole in a wooden box, not much larger than a breakfast cup. But a clumsy neighbour, one day looking at this extraordinary watch, let it fall; and, turning hastily round to take it up, crushed it to pieces with his foot. Ferguson was so much discouraged by this accident, that he never attempted another; especially as he was convinced he could not make one that would be of any use.

"As soon as he had recovered from his illness, and was able to go abroad, he carried his globe, clock, and maps, to Sir James Dunbar, of Durn, about seven miles from his father's house; as he had been informed that Sir James was a good natured and inquisitive gentleman. He was received with great kindness; and Sir James asked him if he did not think he could clean his clocks. Ferguson made the attempt, and succeeded. From this time he was employed around the neighbourhood in the cleaning and repairing of clocks, and in drawing patterns for ladies' needle-work, at which he also became very skilful. Sir James invited him to live at his house, which he did for some time. By his different employments, he now contrived to earn so much money, that he began to think of growing rich; and he had the satisfaction of frequently supplying the wants of his father.

"While in the house of Sir James Dunbar, Ferguson's taste for drawing induced Lady Dipple, the sister of Sir James, to invite him, for twelve months, to her house at Edinburgh, that he might have an opportunity of

acquiring a knowledge of that art, under proper masters. He succeeded so well, that he was encouraged to attempt portrait painting. In this he acquired so great a facility, as to make it a lucrative profession, and to obtain from it his principal support for more than twenty years.

"It ought to be remarked that, during the two years that Ferguson resided in Edinburgh, he had so strong a desire to study medicine that, for a time, he forsook all his favourite pursuits for this. He then went into the country, with a cargo of medicines and plasters, but with a very scanty knowledge of the art; and began to practice medicine in his native town. He was, however, an unsuccessful practitioner; and, finding that no one paid him for his medicines, he went to Inverness, for the purpose of resuming his profession of a painter.

"After having continued some years longer in different parts of Scotland, Ferguson, in 1745, went to London, with letters of recommendation to many persons of science and distinction. Here he began his old profession of portrait painting; amusing himself, at his leisure hours, with astronomical studies. He afterwards published some curious astronomical tables and calculations; and he gave public lectures (by subscription) in experimental philosophy, not only in London, but in many of the principal towns of England, with the highest marks of approbation. He was elected a Fellow of the Royal Society; and, about the same time, was introduced to his present Majesty, then Prince of Wales. The prince attended his lectures, and took great pleasure in conversing with him on astronomical subjects. Mr. Ferguson received several presents from the prince; and, afterwards, a pension of fifty pounds a year out of his privy purse, which was regularly paid to him till his death.

"Mr. Ferguson had always a weak constitution; which perhaps was much injured by his intense application to study. After long struggling with a lingering

illness, he expired on the sixteenth of November, 1776, in the sixty-sixth year of his age; leaving an only son, to whom he bequeathed the property that he had derived from his lectures, and his various works."

Here Miss Irwin terminated. Edmund inquired whether Ferguson had not died very poor.

Mr. Allen. His friends had always imagined him to be poor; but he left, at his death, a sum of money amounting to about six thousand pounds.

Lady Irwin. What was his private character?

Mr. Allen. In his manners he was benevolent, meek, and innocent as a child. His whole life is said to have been an example of resignation, and Christian piety; and his philosophy to have produced in him, only diffidence and urbanity, a love for mankind, and sincere devotion to his Maker.

Frederic. He is described to have been a man of clear judgment, and unwearied application; and to have had a happy manner of conveying his ideas on the subjects of astronomy, and natural philosophy, with ease, perspicuity, and familiarity; and thus he became not only a useful, but a popular writer and lecturer.

Mr. Allen. Notwithstanding this, it is somewhat singular, that his general mathematical knowledge was very superficial. Of algebra he understood little more than the notation; and he often declared, that he could never demonstrate even a single proposition in Euclid's Elements. His constant method was, to satisfy himself as to the truth of any problem, by measurement with a scale and compasses.

Louisa. What were his principal publications?

Mr. Allen. Besides astronomical tables, tracts, letters, and papers on subjects connected with philosophy, Ferguson published, in 1756, "Astronomy explained upon Sir Isaac Newton's Principles, and made easy to those who have not studied Mathematics;" in 1760, "Lectures on several Subjects, in Mechanics, Hydrostatics, Pneumatics, Optics, Geography, Astronomy,

and Dialling;" in 1768, "The Young Gentleman's and Ladies' Astronomy familiarly explained, in Ten Dialogues;" which was reprinted in the ensuing year, under the title of "An easy Introduction to Astronomy for Young Gentlemen and Ladies;" in 1773, "Select Mechanical Exercises, with a short Account of the Author, by himself." The two first of these works have each been lately republished by Dr. Brewster, in two volumes octavo, with additions of discoveries since the death of the author. The lectures on mechanics, &c, are considered the best and most useful of all his works. They passed through several editions, and are said to have contributed more to the diffusion of mathematical knowledge, than all the other works that have been written upon these subjects.

FORTY-THIRD EVENING.

THE last life proposed for discussion, under the present head of Biographical Conversations, was that of the philanthropist JOHN HOWARD, the active and indefatigable friend of the unfortunate; whose pure delight it was to visit the abodes of misery, wherever found, that he might be the happy instrument of alleviating its oppression; and the great tendency of whose labours was, to effect the most important improvements, both with respect to comfort and morals, in the regulation of public prisons, not merely of our own, but of every other country. He was born at Hackney, in the year 1726.

Miss Irwin said she had read much relative to the exertions of Mr. Howard, in visiting prisons in different parts of Europe, but was unacquainted with the particulars of his early life. Frederic replied that, his father had kept a carpet-warehouse in Long-lane, Smithfield; and that, dying while Mr. Howard was very young, the guardians of the latter had subse-

quently apprenticed him to a wholesale grocer in the city of London.

Mr. Allen. But he did not long continue in this situation; for his constitution appearing too delicate for the toils of a laborious business, and his father having left him, and an only sister, in circumstances which placed him above the necessity of pursuing it, he bought out the remainder of his indentures before the time, and made a tour through the principal parts of France and Italy.

Frederic. This is nearly all the account we have of his early years. Not having been brought up to a learned profession, his education had not been much attended to; but the strength of his mind, and the steadiness of his perseverance, supplied, in a great degree, this deficiency.

Louisa. On his return from the continent, what were the occurrences respecting him?

Edmund. He took lodgings in the house of a Mrs. Lardeau, a sensible and worthy woman, who resided at Stoke Newington. His health was now very infirm; and, in Mrs. Lardeau, he found so tender and affectionate a nurse, that, although she was old enough to be his mother, and had herself been an invalid for many years, he was induced to offer her his hand in marriage. She was surprised at the offer, and expostulated with him on the extravagance of such an union. But it was not the character of Mr. Howard to be deterred from his purpose by a dread of obloquy or ridicule; and she became his wife in the year 1752.

Louisa. How did Mr. Howard chiefly occupy his time while at Stoke Newington?

Edmund. When his health would permit it, he employed himself in improving his mind by reading and study. It is said that he would frequently ride out with a book in his pocket; and, turning his horse to graze on a common, or by the side of the road, would take out the book, and read for several hours.

Lady Irwin. He must have been a very eccentric man.

Edmund. He was certainly singular in many of his habits; but nearly all his singularities were of an amiable kind.

His wife survived their union but three years; and he sincerely mourned her loss.

Frederic. Being now disengaged from domestic cares, he determined to make a voyage to Lisbon.

Louisa. And what was the object of this voyage?

Frederic. Apparently a somewhat singular one: to view the state of Lisbon after the dreadful earthquake, which had occurred in November, 1755. Mr. Howard sailed in the Hanover frigate. This country was then at war with France. He was taken prisoner; and the inconveniences that he suffered, during his subsequent confinement in France, are supposed to have first awakened his sympathy in favour of prisoners, and to have, in some degree, given rise to his subsequent plans for rendering prisons less pernicious to health than they had before been.

Louisa. I am aware of Mr. Howard's zealous attention to the state of prisons in various parts of Europe. Did he commence his different journies of inspection immediately after his own liberation?

Frederic. I believe not immediately afterwards. He returned to England, and settled at Brokenhurst, in the New Forest, Hants.

Sir Charles. One of his first acts on settling at Brokenhurst was to make a tour through the parish, and to visit, in person, every poor family it contained. To each of these he gave pecuniary relief, comfortable clothing where it was requisite, a Bible, Prayer-book, and the Whole Duty of Man.

Lady Irwin. I thought Mr. Howard had been a dissenter from the Church of England; and yet you state that he distributed Prayer-books at Brokenhurst.

Sir Charles. Mr. Howard had been brought up in the principles of Presbyterianism; but his religion was of that description which considered chiefly the practice of Christian duties. His attendance at the church

and meeting-house was equally regular. His benevolence was of the most extensive kind. It was enough for him to see distress; the form of it was not material; no difference of sect or opinion cramped his philanthropy, or prevented him from endeavouring to promote the happiness of mankind.

During his residence at Brokenhurst, Mr. Howard was married a second time. His present lady lived about seven years; and, dying in 1765, left an only child, a son. About this time he relinquished his habitation in the New Forest, and purchased an estate near Bedford.

Frederic. Here his benevolence was again actively displayed. He projected numerous improvements in his property, for the purpose chiefly of giving employment to the poor. He built for them numerous cottages, and distributed both money and clothes according to their wants and deserts.

Edmund. It was during his residence near Bedford, that the actual distress of prisoners was brought more immediately under his notice than before. In 1773 he served the office of high sheriff; and was witness to so much misery, as, reviving the idea of his own confinement in France, to be led to the benevolent design of himself visiting the gaols, and other places of confinement, throughout England, with a view of procuring, if possible, an alleviation of the miseries of the sufferers. This project he accomplished with indefatigable zeal; and being afterwards examined before the house of commons, on the subject of prisons, he received the thanks of that house for his attention to them.

Lady Irwin. It must have been extremely gratifying to him, to have thus found that his voluntary labours had not been wholly in vain; and that they appeared to promise those benefits which he had proposed to himself by them.

Mr. Allen. A stimulus to do good was scarcely necessary to such a man as Mr. Howard; but the

encouragement he received, induced him to hope for more success from greater exertions. He, therefore, again and again visited the receptacles of crime, of poverty, and misery, throughout Great Britain and Ireland; and, shortly afterwards, extended his views even to foreign countries.

Frederic. With this design, sir, I have read that he three times travelled through France, four times through Germany, five through Holland, twice through Italy, once in Spain and Portugal; and through Denmark, Sweden, Russia, Poland, and part of Turkey.

Louisa. How many years were in the whole occupied by these various excursions?

Frederic. With some short intervals of rest at home, nearly twelve. There never before was so considerable a portion of the life of any individual applied to such benevolent and useful purposes, and that without any motive whatever of interest or pleasure, beyond the virtuous satisfaction of benefiting his fellow-creatures.

Edmund. I have read a considerable portion of Mr. Howard's work on the state of prisons in England and Wales, including an account of some foreign prisons, as it was republished in 1784.

Mr. Allen. And a more lamentable statement of private misery, of insensibility in goalers, and of neglect or cruelty in those who had the superintendence of prisons, was never exhibited to the commiseration or abhorrence of mankind.

Lady Irwin. The exposure of all this to the public must alone have had a beneficial tendency; and, indeed, we find that, in consequence of it, the state of prisons was afterwards much improved both in our own and in other countries. So much attention was excited in England, that I recollect a large subscription was made for the purpose of erecting a statue to the honour of Mr. Howard.

Frederic. He was abroad at the time, engaged in one of his peregrinations of love and charity to the human race. When he was first informed of this

intention, he exclaimed, "Have I not one friend in England who would put a stop to such a proceeding?" and immediately wrote to the subscribers, to request, in the most earnest manner, that the design might be given up. This was done; and the money that had been collected, was applied principally towards the relief of prisoners.

Edmund. But Mr. Howard was not contented with visiting prisons: his anxious attention was also paid to an examination of lazarettos or hospitals for the reception of diseased persons. And, in 1789, he published "An Account of the principal Lazarettos in Europe, with various Papers relative to the Plague, together with further Observations on some Foreign Prisons and Hospitals; and additional Remarks on the present State of those in Great Britain and Ireland."

Frederic. In this publication he announced his design of revisiting Russia, Turkey, and some other countries, and extending his tour in the east. "I am not," he says, "insensible of the dangers that must attend such a journey. Trusting, however, in the protection of that kind Providence which has hitherto preserved me, I calmly and cheerfully commit myself to the disposal of unerring wisdom. Should it please God to cut off my life in the prosecution of this design, let not my conduct be uncandidly imputed to rashness or enthusiasm, but to a serious, deliberate conviction, that I am pursuing the path of duty; and to a sincere desire of being made an instrument of more extensive usefulness to my fellow-creatures, than could be expected in the narrower circle of a retired life."

Sir Charles. It was in the pursuance of this truly benevolent design, that Mr. Howard did actually fall a sacrifice. Having passed some time at Cherson, a new Russian settlement, on the banks of the Dnieper, where the insalubrity of the place had cut off thousands of the inhabitants, his benevolence induced him to visit a young lady, who lay dangerously ill of an infectious fever, that he might administer some medi-

cines for her relief. Mr. Howard caught the distemper, and became a victim to his humanity. He died about twelve days afterwards, on the twentieth of January, 1790; and was interred in a place selected by himself, in the desert near the village of Dauphigny, at a little distance from Cherson.

Lady Irwin. Did he not give directions that there should be no monument erected over his remains?

Sir Charles. He did so; but a black pyramid, or obelisk, though without any inscription, was erected there. A compliment was paid to him in this country, which no other private subject ever received: his death was announced to the public by the London Gazette.

Louisa. I have often seen the monument that, after his death, was erected to his memory in St. Paul's cathedral. It represents Mr. Howard, in a Roman dress, with a look and attitude expressive of benevolence and activity; holding in one hand a scroll of plans for the improvement of prisons, &c. and in the other a key; while he is trampling on chains and and fetters. The epitaph contains a sketch of his life, and concludes with these words: "He trod an open but unfrequented path to immortality, in the ardent and unremitted exercise of Christian charity. May this tribute to his fame excite an emulation of his truly glorious achievements!"

Sir Charles. We have yet said nothing respecting Mr. Howard's habits of life. In these he was rigidly temperate. He totally avoided the use of animal food; and, at one time, subsisted entirely on potatoes; and at another chiefly on tea and bread and butter. He did not at all mix with convivial society; and no public invitations, however honourable, were accepted by him. His only delight, during many of the latter years of his life, appears to have consisted in visiting and affording comfort in the abodes of misery.

Mr. Allen. How beautiful an eulogium did Mr. Burke pronounce upon him, even during his life, in a speech made at Bristol, in the year 1780. "I

cannot name this gentleman," says he, "without remarking that his labours and writings have done much to open the eyes and the hearts of mankind. He has visited all Europe,—not to survey the sumptuousness of palaces, nor the stateliness of temples; not to make accurate measurements of the remains of ancient grandeur, nor to form a scale of the curiosity of modern art; not to collect medals, nor collate manuscripts;—but to dive into the depths of dungeons; to plunge into the infections of hospitals; to survey the mansions of sorrow and pain; to take the gage and dimensions of misery, depression, and contempt; to remember the forgotten, to attend to the neglected, to visit the forsaken, and to compare and collate the distresses of all men in all countries. His plan was original, and it is as full of genius, as it is of humanity. It was a voyage of discovery, a circumnavigation of charity. Already the benefit of his labour is felt more or less in every country; I hope he will anticipate his final reward, by seeing all its effects fully realised in his own. He will receive, not by retail, but in gross, the reward of those who visit the prisoner; and he has so forestalled and monopolized this branch of charity, that there will be, I trust, little room to merit by such acts of benevolence hereafter."

With the life of Howard the present class of biographical discussions terminated. A new series was proposed by Mr. Allen, which, he said, might perhaps be rendered even more entertaining than the past, because they would comprise an account of personal adventures, sometimes of very extraordinary kind: they would also tend to illustrate, in a familiar manner, the geography of foreign countries, and, in some degree, the habits and customs of the people of foreign nations.

He then laid down the plan of a series of *Biographical Conversations*, relative to the most eminent VOYAGERS AND TRAVELLERS of all nations. He

proposed that the leading domestic events of each of the lives should, as before, be subject to discussion: but, with respect to their different *enterprises and adventures*, he was desirous of having these drawn up, and read in the form of narratives. By this plan the mode of discussion, he said, would be somewhat varied; and the peculiar interest of the narratives themselves would not be weakened by interruption. He stated, that he had another reason: the young persons would thereby be supplied with daily exercises in English composition. It was probable, he remarked, that most of the narratives might elicit some discussion; and, he observed, that, in such case, this would, of course, take place immediately after they were respectively read. Sir Charles and Lady Irwin each approved of the project; and the young gentlemen were directed to prepare themselves with an account of the life and voyages of Columbus. To this they immediately and most cheerfully assented; at the same time expressing themselves much indebted to Sir Charles Irwin and Mr. Allen, both for the pleasure and information they had derived from the late discussions.

FINIS.

C. Whittingham, Printer, Chiswick.